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**ANTHOLOGY OF MODERN
SLAVONIC LITERATURE**

By the same Author

MODERN RUSSIAN POETRY :

Texts (Accented) and Translations. Selected
and Translated, with an Introduction,
by P. SELVER

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ANTHOLOGY OF MODERN SLAVONIC LITERATURE

IN PROSE AND VERSE

TRANSLATED BY

P. SELVER

With an Introduction and Literary Notes

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Complete selections of prose and poetry, which are typical of the
race. Introduction discusses the language relationships of the groups
represented, and brief notes help to place the authors. Useful to
students—may interest some others.

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PREFACE

THE bulk of this Anthology has been selected from translations which have been accumulating for several years. My aim has been to include what is most typically racial; but what is most typically racial is not always the most adapted for translation. In making my choice of material, this was one of the difficulties I had to deal with. It was less acute in the prose section; but on the other hand, this section presented certain other obstacles of its own. The first arose from the need of finding short prose works complete in themselves. Only twice (with Reymont and Machar) did I deviate from this principle, and even in these two cases the reader will find that each of the extracts chosen, although part of a longer work, forms an organic whole. The second obstacle was due to the purely practical difficulty, under present conditions, of obtaining the necessary books. To take a particular instance, this accounts for the scanty manner in which Southern Slav prose is represented. It is hoped, however, that such gaps as these (and perhaps

the many others) may be filled in later when circumstances are more favourable.

The word "modern" has been interpreted usually from a chronological point of view. In many cases its application to style and tendency followed as a matter of course. There are a few obvious exceptions. Thus, Prešern died in 1849. Shevtchenko's poems date back more than half a century. The "Ode to Slavdom" by Preradović was written in 1865. In all these cases my choice is justified, I think, by the racial criterion I have mentioned. But for the most part, the chronological standard has been adhered to. About three in four of the writers represented are still alive.

Ever since I began to arrange my material, I have had the considerable advantage of frequent consultations with Mr. Janko Lavrin. Indeed, I believe it is due to his suggestion that this work has assumed its present form. For that definite service, together with a great deal of personal encouragement which cannot be precisely indicated, I here express my gratitude, although it cannot but fall far short of what is due.

P. SELVER.

London,
April, 1918.

INTRODUCTION

THE distribution of the Slavs in Europe is excellently conjectured by Professor Lubor Niederle, the Czech authority, in the following terms (“*Slovanský Svět*,” p. 2) :—

“The primitive Slav race had its nucleus between the Oder and the Dnieper; stage by stage, in prehistoric times, it had reached the Elbe, the Saale, the Danube, the Niemen and the Baltic. It had spread itself over this wide area, partly through the influence of certain geographical conditions, as, for example, the main water-courses and mountains, partly through currents of civilisation, whose effects in the East differed from those in the West; partly also, through the influence of linguistic development. To begin with, the divisions were three in number. The first, to the west of the Vistula and the Carpathians, spread out in a westerly direction beyond the lower Elbe, the Saale and the Bohemian Forest, resulting in those branches of the Slavs known as the Polabians, Pomeranians, Poles and Czechs; the second, whose primitive headquarters lay between the Upper Vistula, the Dniester and the middle Danube, in course of time advanced

south of the Carpathians, and while one detachment settled on the Drave, the other, crossing the Save and Danube, penetrated to the Balkan regions and developed into the Slovene, Serbo-Croatian and Bulgarian groups; the third fraction extended in a vast circle from the lower Dnieper basin, and reached the Gulf of Finland, the upper Dnieper and the Volga to the north, the Don to the east, and the lower Danube to the south. This division formed the Russian race, which was further modified within itself under the influence of varying local conditions."

This account deals feasilby with the difficult question of origins. It has the additional advantage of forming a convenient basis upon which to catalogue the modern Slavs. By retaining the three suggested divisions, which may be designated as Western, Southern and Eastern (this being the order in which their origins are dealt with), we arrive at the following statistical arrangement :—

Western Slavs.—Poles, 20 millions.

Czechs, 7 millions.

Slovaks, 2 millions.

Wends, 150 thousand.

Southern Slavs.—Serbo-Croatians, 9 millions.

Bulgarians, 5 millions.

Slovenes, $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions.

Eastern Slavs.—Great Russians, 65 millions.

Little Russians (Malo-Russians,
Ruthenians or Ukrainians),
31 millions.

White Russians, 7 millions.

This results in a total of nearly 150 millions, but the figures are, of course, very approximate. It must be remembered, for instance, that political conditions have made the census returns in certain districts somewhat unreliable, and cases are not unknown where Slav populations help to increase German or Magyar totals. Slav authorities themselves have differed greatly, not only in the question of figures, but also in actual classification. Thus, Šafařík, one of the heralds of the Czech revival, writing in 1826, estimated a total of just over 55 million Slavs, among whom he included what he called Bosniaks, Dalmatians and Slavonians. The same authority drew no distinction between the Great and Little Russians, estimated the Ukrainians in Austria at only three millions and had very vague ideas about the Bulgarians. Writing again in 1842, he increased his estimated total to 78 millions.

Several Slav tribes became extinct at an early period, although their former abodes are often revealed in Saxon and Prussian place-names (Pomerania, Prussia, Leipzig and Berlin are

examples). Jan Kollár, one of the poets of the Czech revival, refers to some of these lost races in his famous Prologue to "The Daughter of Sláva," written in 1824 :—

"Where have ye wandered, dear nation of Slavs, that
formerly dwelt here,
Drinking now of the Saale, now Pomeranian
springs?
Peaceful stock of the Sorbs, and Obotritian offspring,
Where are the Wilzen, and where, grandsons of Uker,
are ye?"

The difficulties of classification are almost as great when we come to consider the Slav languages. In 1822, Dobrovský, the practical founder of Slav philology, divided them into 9 different tongues; Šafařík in 1842 proposed 6 languages with 13 dialects; Schleicher in 1865 proposed 8; Miklosich, a prominent Slovene scholar, decided on 9; Jagić, a Croat authority of European reputation, is in favour of 8. The reason for this diversity is that some philologists designate as a language what others will admit only as a dialect. Thus, many Russian authorities are unwilling to treat Ukrainian as a separate language (not altogether justly); Slovaks such as Czambel, with the fatal Slav tendency towards cleavage, insist on a distinct Slovak race (of Southern Slav origin) with a distinct Slovak language (again not altogether justly). Even the

Wends who live under German rule in parts of Saxony and Brandenburg, scanty as they are, claim a division into two varying dialects.

However, making all reasonable allowances, we may regard the following as an accurate arrangement :—

Eastern	{	Russian
		Little Russian (Malo-Russian, Ruthenian, Ukrainian).
Western	{	Polish
		Czech-Slovak
		Wendic.
Southern	{	Serbo-Croat
		Slovene
		Bulgarian.

Of these languages, Polish, Czech, Croat and Wendic are written in the Latin alphabet, adapted to their particular phonetic needs by the use of various diacritic signs. The remainder employ the so-called Cyrillic alphabet. This difference of alphabet is the only real distinction between Croat and Serbian. It should be noticed that the Cyrillic alphabet is not identical in the case of all the languages that use it. Russian, Ukrainian, Serbian and Bulgarian have the bulk of the letters in common : but each language has also a few characters peculiar to itself.

As a whole, the Slav languages are distinguished by striking similarities of structure and vocabulary. The so-called "aspects" of the verb are common to them all; while the numerous noun inflections are lacking only in Bulgarian. This language, it may be added, differs from the rest also by the use of a definite article, which is suffixed to the noun. The same construction exists in two other Balkan, but non-Slav languages, Albanian and Roumanian.

The following lists will give some idea of the degrees of affinity between the chief Slav languages:—

<i>Russian.</i>	<i>Polish</i>	<i>Czech</i>	<i>Serbo-Croat</i>	<i>Slovene.</i>
pólnye (full)	pelny	pln(ý)	pun(i)	poln(i)
otyéts (father)	ojciec	otec	otac	otec
dyen' (day)	dzien	den	dan	den (dan)
byedá (woe)	biada	bída	biéda	béda
dólgie (long)	dlugi	dlouhý	dug(i)	dolg(i)

These few examples might lead an observer to deduce a closer similarity than would be justified by comparing the languages in the bulk, and taking into account something more than isolated words. Many of the Slavs themselves are apt to exaggerate to the extent to which their languages resemble each other. M. Léger tells of a Slovak who was convinced that his native dialect would be freely understood in Moscow; he was soon disillusioned. V. Hrubý asserts in his "Com-

parative Handbook of the Slavonic Languages” that he “often had the opportunity of observing how Czech, Polish and Russian workmen conversed readily in their native idioms with Croat pedlars for hours at a time.” This is, if anything, slightly overstated.

The fact is, that in spite of many cognate words and constructions, each member of the group has peculiarities of pronunciation and vocabulary which distinguish it often very strikingly from the rest. Thus, Russian with its Tartar elements (found in several everyday words) and fluctuating stress, contrasts with Polish where the stress falls on the penultimate syllable, and where, as in no other modern Slavonic language, two nasal sounds have survived from primitive Slavonic. In Czech again, words have their chief stress on the first syllable, while the vocabulary as a whole is more purely Slavonic than that of the previous two. In general, it will be found that the Slavonic languages of recent development, such as Czech and Slovene, contain fewer words of foreign origin than those whose tradition is more continuous. The reason is, that on the revival of these languages during the early part of last century, the non-Slavonic elements were deliberately eliminated. But even in these languages the native element has, in the last twenty years or so, been modified by an admixture of

foreign words derived largely from a study of French literature. This has resulted in numerous pairs of synonyms, which some native scholars are inclined to welcome on the ground that they provide the language with subtler shades of meaning.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	- - - - -	PAGE vii
--------------	-----------	-------------

PART I—PROSE

RUSSIAN

Anton Chekhov. In a Foreign Land	-	3
Dmitri Merezhkovsky. My Life	- -	10
Fyodor Sologub. The Tiny Man	- -	25
S. N. Sergeyev-Tsensky. The Demigod	-	58

UKRAINIAN

Taras Shevtchenko. Autobiography	-	61
----------------------------------	---	----

POLISH

W. Gomułicki. The Ploughman	- -	71
Bolesław Prus. From the Legends of Ancient Egypt	- - - - -	76
Stanisław Przybyszewski. Chopin	- -	88
W. S. Reymont. In the Old Town at Łódź	-	111

CZECH

J. S. Machar. Sonia (from "The Confessions of an Author")	- - -	117
Jan Neruda. The Vampire	- - -	134
Arne Novák. The Advent of Spring in the South	- - - - -	140
Fráňa Šrámek. June (play in one act)	-	150

SERBIAN

Simo Matavulj. The Latin Boy. A Tale from Montenegro	174
---	-----

PART II—POETRY

RUSSIAN

K. Balmont. (1) Water	191
(2) O waves of the ocean	193
(3) The Magic World	193
V. Bryusov. (1) Dusk	194
(2) The Stonehewer	195
(3) To the Poet	196
S. Gorodetsky. Poland	196
V. Ivanov. The Maenad	197
D. Mereshkovsky. Nirvana	199
N. Minsky. The City Afar	200
F. Sologub. (1) Evil dragon	201
(2) Northern Triolets (i)	202
„ (ii)	202
„ (iii)	203

UKRAINIAN

T. Shevtchenko. (1) Drowsy the waves	204
(2) See fires ablaze	204
(3) If, lordlings, ye could only know	205
(4) Legacy	207

CONTENTS

xvii

PAGE

POLISH

A. Asnyk.	(1) Without Limits	- -	208
	(2) The Torrent	- - -	208
J. Kasprowicz.	(1) The wind whips . . .	-	209
	(2) What is life worth . . . ?		210
M. Konopnicka.	(1) Now when the		
	king . . .	-	211
	(2) Fragment	- -	212
L. Rydel.	(1) Centaur and Woman	-	212
	(2) The Syrens	- - -	213
	(3) Arise, O song ! -	- -	214
L. Staff.	(1) The Strange Shrine	- -	215
	(2) The Goblet of my Heart	-	216
L. Szczepanski.	(1) The Artist to the		
	Woman	- -	216
	(2) Weariness	- -	217
K. Przerwa-Tetmajer.	(1) Song of the		
	Night Mists		218
	(2) On the Lonely		
	Road	-	219
	(3) Czardas	-	220

CZECH

P. Bezruč.	(1) The Pitman	- - -	222
	(2) The Hideous Spectre	-	224
	(3) Vrbice	- - -	226
	(4) I (i) and (ii)	- - -	227
O. Březina.	(1) A Mood	- - -	232
	(2) Roundelay of Hearts	-	233
	(3) The Hands	- - -	239

	PAGE
J. Karásek ze Lvovic. (1) The Dream -	244
(2) Beethoven -	246
A. Klášterský. From the "Ironical Sicilian Octaves : (1) Art - - -	248
(2) Official Soirée at Prince X's -	248
(3) From a Meeting of the Common Council - -	249
(4) Funeral Rites -	249
(5) A Question -	250
(6) To Czech Poetry	250
J. S. Machar. (1) Brooding - - -	251
(2) Autumn Sonnet -	251
(3) October Sonnet -	252
(4) On Golgotha - -	253
(5) Last Will and Testa- ment - - -	258
A. Sova. (1) On the Hill-Side - -	260
(2) Fishponds - - -	261
(3) Smetana's Quartette "From My Life" - - -	261
(4) To Theodor Mommsen -	264
(5) The River - - -	268
(6) Songs of the First May- Tide, V and VI - -	272
O. Theer. (1) City - - -	274
(2) Tempest - - -	275

CONTENTS

xix

PAGE

J. Vrchlický.	(1) Eclogue VII	-	-	276
	(2) Evening in Paris	-	-	277
	(3) A Legend concerning Moderation	-	-	277
	(4) The Ingle Nook	-	-	279
	(5) Walt Whitman	-	-	280
	(6) Mournful Stanzas	-	-	281
	(7) Marco Polo	-	-	282
	(8) From "Songs of the Pilgrim"	-	-	285

SOUTHERN SLAV

(a) *Serbo-Croatian*

J. Dučić.	(1) The Poplars	-	-	-	287
	(2) My Poetry	-	-	-	288
V. Ilić.	(1) By the Vardar	-	-	-	288
	(2) The Last Guest	-	-	-	289
J. Kosor.	(1) The Magician's Flight	-	-	-	291
	(2) Quaffing the Storm	-	-	-	292
L. Kostić.	Syrmia	-	-	-	294
V. Nazor.	Nocturne	-	-	-	296
P. Preradović.	To Slavdom	-	-	-	300
M. Rakić.	The Deserted Shrine	-	-	-	308
S. Stefanović.	(1) The Song of the Dead	-	-	-	309
	(2) The Greatest Joy	-	-	-	310
	(3) The Impotence of Death	-	-	-	311
A. Šantić.	Dalmatian Nocturne	-	-	-	312

	PAGE
(b) <i>Slovene</i>	
A. Aškerc. (1) A Page from the Chronicle of Zajc - - - -	313
(2) The Ferryman - - -	317
F. Prešern. From "Sonnets of Unhap- piness, (1) and (2) - - - -	319
O. Župančič. Ascension Day - - -	320
Literary Notes - - - - -	323
Bibliography - - - - -	347

PART I.

PROSE.

SLAVONIC ANTHOLOGY

PART I. PROSE

RUSSIAN :

ANTON CHEKHOV : IN A FOREIGN LAND.

It is Sunday, at noon. Kamyshev, a landed proprietor, is sitting at home in his dining-room, at a sumptuously appointed table, and is slowly breakfasting. His meal is shared by Monsieur Champune, a dapper, clean-shaven old Frenchman. This Champune was once employed by Kamyshev as a tutor; he taught his children deportment, good pronunciation, and dancing. Later on, when Kamyshev's children had grown up and become lieutenants, Champune remained something in the nature of a masculine governess. The duties of the whilom tutor are not onerous. He has to dress decently, reek of scents, listen to Kamyshev's empty chatter, eat, drink, sleep,—and beyond that, apparently, nothing. In return, he receives board, lodging, and an indefinite salary.

Kamyshev is eating and, as usual, babbling rapidly. “Confound it!” says he, wiping away

the tears which he has provoked through eating a morsel of ham, thickly smeared with mustard. "Whew! It's got into my head and all my joints. Your French mustard couldn't do that, not even if you swallowed a whole pot of it."

"Some like French mustard, and some Russian," remarks Champune mildly.

"Nobody likes French mustard, except the French. But give what you like to a Frenchman,—he'll eat it all up; frogs and rats and cockroaches. Ugh! For instance, you don't like this ham because it's Russian; but give you roasted glass and say it's French, and you'll begin to eat and smack your lips. Your idea is, that all Russian things are rotten."

"I don't say so!"

"All Russian things are rotten, but French,—oh, *c'est très joli*! Your idea is, that there's no better country than France, but my idea is,—well, what is France, honestly speaking? A chunk of earth! Send our local police official there, and within a month he'll ask to be transferred; no room to move! You can travel through all your France in a single day, but in our country you go out of the gate,—no end to be seen. You travel and travel. . . .

"Yes, monsieur, Russia is a tremendous country."

"That it is! Your idea is, that there's no better people than the French. An educated,

intelligent nation ! So civilised ! I'll grant you, the French are all educated, good-mannered. Quite so. A Frenchman will never lapse into boorish behaviour. He'll bring a lady a chair at the proper moment, he won't eat crabs with a fork, he won't spit on the floor, but he hasn't that spirit. . . . No, that spirit isn't in him. I can't make it clear to you, but,—how shall I put it?—a Frenchman is lacking in something or other. . . .” (the speaker waves his fingers about) “something or other . . . something juristic. I remember reading somewhere that you've all got an acquired intelligence from books, while our intelligence is innate. If you instruct a Russian properly in the sciences, there's not one of your professors can equal him.”

“That may be” says Champune, as though against his will.

“No, not may be, but it is so ! It's no good scowling about it, I'm speaking the truth. Russian intelligence is an inventive intelligence. Only, of course, they don't give him free play, and he's not good at bragging. He invents something and smashes it up or gives it to the children to play with, while your Frenchman invents some rubbish and shouts it from the housetops. Just lately our coachman Yona carved a man out of wood ; you pull this man by a thread, and it does something indecent. But Yona doesn't brag about it. In general, I don't care for the French.

I'm not speaking about you, but in general. An immoral nation. From the outside, they are just like men, but they live like dogs. Take, for example now, marriage. If a man here gets married, he sticks to his wife and there's an end of the matter. But the Lord only knows what you do. The man sits all day in the café, and his wife crams the house full of Frenchmen and then for the cancan.

"That's untrue!" Champune cannot keep himself from saying. "In France domestic life is very highly esteemed."

"We know all about that domestic life! You ought to be ashamed of yourself for defending it. But it must be said in all fairness: A swine remains a swine. All thanks to the Germans for having beaten them. My goodness me, thanks to them. God prosper them for it."

"If that is so, monsieur, I don't understand," says the Frenchman, leaping up with his eyes flashing, "if you hate the French, why you keep me here."

"Where am I to put you, then?"

"Dismiss me, and I'll go back to France."

"Wha-a-t? Do you think they'd let you into France now? Why, you're a traitor to your country. Sometimes you call Napoleon a great man, sometimes Gambetta. The devil himself couldn't make you out."

"Monsieur!" says Champune in French, splut-

tering and crumpling his serviette in his hands, "A greater insult than you have just flung upon my feelings, not even my enemy could think of. We are done with each other." And striking up a tragic attitude, the Frenchman daintily throws his serviette upon the table and departs in a dignified manner.

About three hours later, the table is laid afresh, and the dinner is served. Kamyshev sits down alone to dinner. After his preliminary glass of spirits, he is seized with a craving for vapid chatter. He wants to gossip and he has no auditor.

"What is Alphonse Ludovicovitch doing?" he asks the flunkey.

"He's packing his trunk, sir."

"What tomfoolery, Heaven help us!" says Kamyshev, and goes to the Frenchman.

Champune is sitting in the middle of his room on the floor, and with trembling hands is packing his trunk with washing, scent-bottles, prayer-books, braces, neckties. His whole air of respectability, the trunk, the bed, and the table give the impression of something elegant and womanish. From his big blue eyes large tears are falling on to the trunk.

"Where are you off to?" asks Kamyshev, after looking on a little.

The Frenchman is silent.

"Do you want to go away?" continues Kamyshev. "Well, just as you please. I won't stop

you. But there's one curious thing; how can you get along without a passport? That's what puzzles me. You know, I've lost your passport. I put it away somewhere among some papers, and it's got lost. And they're strict about passports here. You won't manage to go five versts before they'll collar you."

Champune lifts up his head and looks at Kamyshev mistrustfully.

"Oh, yes. You'll see. They'll tell by your face that you've got no passport, and they'll want to know at once who you are, Alphonse Champune? We know these Alphonse Champunes. Would you mind stepping this way for a short journey?"

"You're joking."

"What should I joke for? A lot of good it would be to me! But just notice this one thing. Please don't whine afterwards and write letters. I won't lift a finger, when they lead you past here in manacles."

Champune jumps up, and pale, with eyes wide open, he begins to pace across the room.

"Why do you treat me like this?" he says, clutching at his head in desperation. "Good Heavens! Oh, cursed be the hour in which the pernicious idea entered by mind to leave my native land!"

"Come, come, come! It was only a little joke on my part!" remarks Kamyshev, mitigating his

tone. "What a queer chap, not to understand a joke. There's no talking to you."

"My dear friend," whimpers Champune, pacified by Kamyshev's tone, "I swear to you, I am attached to Russia, to you, and to your children. To leave you would be as hard for me as to die. But every word of yours cuts into my heart."

"Oh, you queer fellow! If I abuse the French, why on earth should you feel insulted? There are heaps of people we abuse, and supposing all of them were to feel insulted? You are a queer fellow, really! Just follow the example of Lazar Isakitch, my tenant. Sometimes I call him this, sometimes that, Jew one day, scab another, and make a pig's ear with my coat-tail, and pull him by the earlocks. *He* doesn't feel insulted."

"But what a servile creature he is. For a kopeck he'll put up with any degradation."

"Well, well, well . . . Never mind. Let's go in to dinner. Peace and harmony!"

Champune powders his tear-stained face and follows Kamyshev into the dining-room. The first course is served in silence; after the second, the same performance begins again, and thus Champune's tribulations have no end.

DMITRI MEREZHKOVSKY : MY LIFE.

My father, who is now dead, told me that my great-grandfather, Fyodor Merezhky, was a major in the Cossack army at Glukhov, in Little Russia. My grandfather, Ivan Fyodorovitch, came to Petrograd towards the end of the 18th century in the reign of Paul I., and being a man of title, was admitted into the Ismailov regiment of the guards. It was probably about that time that he changed his Little Russian name Merezhky for the Great Russian Merezhkovsky. Later on my grandfather was transferred from Petrograd to Moscow, and took part in the war of 1812.

My father, Sergey Ivanovitch, was born at Moscow, in 1821, being the son of Ivan Fyodorovitch, and his second wife, *née* Kurbskaya. He was educated at a private school owned by a Madame Liebermann. In 1839 he entered the Civil Service. He served first with Talysin, Governor of Orenburg, as assistant to the head of a department, then in a similar capacity with Count Shavalov, marshal of the Emperor's household, and finally as head of a department in the Court Chancery. He held this position under the minister, Count Adlerberg, during the whole reign of Alexander II. In 1853 he married Var-

vara Vassilyevna Tchesnokova, a daughter of the chief of the Central Police Bureau at Petrograd.

I came into the world on August 2nd (14th) 1865, at Petrograd, on the Yelagin Island, in an official building belonging to the castle, where my parents used to spend the summer. I still love the melancholy thickets and the ponds in the marshy Yelagin Park, where we children, under the influence of Mayne-Reid and Cooper, used to play at "Indians." The pine-tree in which, hovering like a bird in the airy heights, I used to read and dream, and, far from all mankind, felt like a free "savage," is there to this very day. I can still remember how we would explore the gloomy cellars of the castle, where the stalactites hanging from the damp ceiling sparkled in the candle-light; or how we mounted to the flat green dome of the castle from which we had a view of the sea; and also, how we went boating, and, on the sandy shore of the Krestovsky Island we would light a fire and bake potatoes, and feel more like "savages" than ever.

In winter we used to stay in the old Bauer House, which was built as long ago as the days of Peter the Great. It stands at the corner of the Neva and the Fontanka, by the Pratcheshny Bridge, opposite the Summer Garden. On one side we had the summer palace of Peter I., on the other his "cottage" and the oldest church in Petrograd, the wooden Trinity Cathedral. My

father's huge, two-storied official residence had any number of rooms, both for use and for show. They were large and gloomy, the windows faced towards the north, and the decorations were dull and pompous. My father could not bear the children to make a noise and disturb him in his work; we always crept past his study door on tiptoe.

I now believe that my father had many good qualities. But, always morose and harassed by the heavy official duties of those old days, he was a man who never managed to lead a real family life. There were nine of us, six boys and three girls. As children we lived on fairly good terms with each other, but later, each went his own way, for we lacked the spiritual ties which always come from the father.

I was the youngest boy and my mother loved me more than her other sons. If there is any good in me at all, I have to thank her for it. When I was 7 or 8, I nearly died of diphtheria; I owe my life to my mother's devoted care.

My father used to go on long official journeys abroad, and to Livadia in the Crimea, where the invalid Empress was then residing, and he left us children in the care of Amalia Christianovna, the old housekeeper, a German woman from Reval. She was a good-natured, but narrow-minded and shy sort of person. What I felt for her was not so much love, as childlike pity. I also had an

old nurse who used to tell me Russian folk-tales and legends of the saints. Even now I can remember the dark corner with the eikon and a lamp burning in front of it, and the never-returning joy of childish prayer. I did not really like going to church; the priests in their ornate dress made me feel afraid.

Sometimes, to please my mother, my father took me with him to the Crimea, where we owned a small estate close to the waterfall of Utchan-Su. It was there that I first became acquainted with the beauty of the south. I still remember the splendid castle at Oreanda, that now lies in ruins. The white marble pillars by the blue sea form my imperishable symbol of ancient Greece.

I was educated at the 3rd High School. It was at the end of the seventies and the beginning of the eighties, during the dull period of strictest classicism. There was no trace of education,—nothing but cramming and drill. Our head-master, a half-crazy old German, was called Lemonius, and the name suited him well. The teachers were all insignificant place-hunters. I have no pleasant memories of any of them, except Kessler, the old Latin master, author of the well-known grammar. Although he did not do us much good, he did at least have a kindly glance for us.

I rarely mixed with my schoolfellows, for I was shy and unsociable. The only one with whom I

was at all intimate was Evgeni Solovyov, who became a journalist and critic (he is no longer alive); the tie between us, however, was not the similarity, but the divergency of our views; he was a sceptic, and I already had mystical leanings.

At the age of 13 I began to write. My first poem opened thus :

“ The clouds were scattered, and the heavens
Gleamed joyously, and bright and blue. . . .”

It was an imitation of Pushkin's “ Fountain of Bakhtchisaraï.” It was about this time that my first critical treatise was produced,—a set essay on the Legend of Igor, for which Mokhnatchov, my Russian teacher, gave me full marks. I was prouder of this success than I have ever been in the whole subsequent course of my literary career.

On March 1st, 1881, I was walking up and down in our dining-room composing a poem on a subject from the Koran. The servant-girl came running in from the street, and spoke of a dreadful explosion which she had just heard. Later, my father came home to lunch direct from the castle. He was terribly upset, tear-stained and pale, and told us of an attempt upon the Emperor's life.

“ There you have the fruits of Nihilism,” he said. “ What more do these monsters want? They have not spared even such an angel as that . . .”

My eldest brother, Constantine, a science student (later a well-known biologist), a passionate nihilist, attempted to defend the "monsters." My father flew into a rage, stamped his feet, cursed his son, and drove him out of the house. My mother implored forgiveness for her son, but my father would not hear of it.

This quarrel lasted several years. My mother became ill through fretting about it. About that time she contracted the liver trouble of which she subsequently died. She lives in my memory as a martyr and mediator for her children, but especially for her two favourite sons,—me and my eldest brother.

In the upper classes at school I became a warm admirer of Molière, and founded a "Molière Society." We pursued no political aims, but this did not prevent the political police from summoning us one fine day. An enquiry was instituted, and we lads of 16 and 17 were credited with nothing less than the intention to "overthrow the existing order." It was only my father's position that prevented me from being arrested and expelled. My mother, moreover, had managed to keep the whole affair from reaching my father's ears.

I went on writing verses. My father was very proud of them, had numerous copies made, and showed them to all his acquaintances. In 1879, if I am not mistaken, when I was 14 years old, he

once took me to Alupka, to see the 70-year-old Countess, Elisabeth Vorontsov. I did not know then that I had the honour to kiss a hand which had been kissed half a century before by Pushkin.

In 1880, at the house of Countess Tolstoy, the widow of the poet, my father made the acquaintance of Dostoyevsky, and thereupon he took me to see him. I still remember the little apartment in Kolokolnaya Street, the narrow ante-room which was filled with copies of "The Brothers Karamazov," and the equally narrow study where Fyodor Mikhailovitch was sitting and correcting proofs. Turning red and pale, and stammering, I read him my wretched verses. He listened to me in silent annoyance. We had probably disturbed him in his work.

"Bad, very bad! Beneath all criticism!" he said at length. "To write well it is first necessary to endure much, to suffer much."

"Then he had better not write; I do not want him to suffer," replied my father.

I can still remember the penetrating glance of Dostoyevsky's transparent, pale-blue eyes, and the pressure of his hand when we left. I never saw him again, and soon after that meeting I heard of his death. About the same time I made the acquaintance of an ensign at the military academy, who later was to become the famous poet Semyon Nadson. I loved him like a brother. Even then, he had consumption and was always

speaking about death. We had many arguments on religious questions; he denied and I affirmed.

It was Nadson who introduced me to the poet Pleshtcheyev, editorial secretary of the "National Annals." I can still see the gaunt and narrow shoulders wrapped in a plaid, and I can hear the hoarse, hollow cough, and the bellowing voice of Saltykov Shtchedrin, whose quarters were in the editorial sanctum.

My first appearance in public was, if I am not mistaken, in the year 1882, with a poem which was printed in the "Illustrated Review," under the management of Scheller-Mikhailov. My subsequent works were issued in the "National Annals." After I had passed out of the High School in 1884, I entered the historical-philological faculty of Petrograd University. I am scarcely more indebted to the University than to the High School. So that really I grew up without any schooling as well as without fatherly guidance.

During my time as a student I was a warm adherent of positivism—Spencer, Comte, Mill, Darwin. But as from my childhood I had been religious, I had a dark inkling that positivist philosophy was unsound, I sought a solution, but found none, and was consumed by grief and doubt.

In the students' Historical Society, I debated with the convinced positivist Vodovosov, and

endeavoured to prove that a conception of the world which is to assign a meaning to life cannot possibly be based upon the "impenetrable" of Spencer.

Through Pleshtcheyev I became a visitor at Madame Davydov's, the wife of the famous musician and director of the Petrograd Conservatoire. In her house I met Gontcharov, who was already a blind old man, and the poets Maikov and Polonsky, and later Korolenko, Garshin, Mikhailovsky, and Uspensky, who were contributors to the "Northern Messenger," founded by Madame Yevreinovna. I also wrote for this review, and in it I published "Silvia," a dreadfully long and clumsy dramatic poem, together with a sympathetic essay on Chekhov, who first appeared about that time, but had not yet attracted anyone's attention.

Mikhailovsky had a great influence on me, not only through his works, which I fairly devoured, but also through his whole noble personality. He commissioned me to write an essay on "The Peasant in French Literature"; when the work was completed, he rejected it; it was too feeble and did not harmonise with the tone of the paper. Mikhailovsky and Uspensky were my first real teachers. I once visited Glyeb Uspensky at Tchudovo, and talked with him all night on questions about which I was most deeply concerned; about the religious meaning of life. He declared

that this meaning was to be sought in the conception of life held by the lower classes. He gave me the addresses of various people who were closely acquainted with the life of the people,—village schoolmasters and statisticians, and he advised me to visit these persons. In the summer of the same year I travelled through the Volga and Kama districts, the governments of Ufa and Orenburg, went on foot through the villages, had conversations with the peasants and made notes of my impressions. In the government of Tver I visited the peasant Vassala Syutayev, the founder of a religious sect which has many similarities to the teaching of Tolstoy. Tolstoy had visited Syutayev only a short time before I did, and the peasant told me a great deal about the writer.

The “Confession” of Tolstoy which appeared about that time made a tremendous impression on me. There arose in me a dim suspicion that the positivist nationalism was, after all, not the final truth. For all that, I had the intention, after leaving the University, to go among the people and to become a village schoolmaster. Nikolay Minsky made fun of me and even offered to bet that I would never carry out my intention. Of course, he won the bet.

In my nationalism there was a large admixture of childish folly, but it was entirely sincere, and I am glad that there was such a period in my life, and that it did not pass away without leaving any traces.

It was somewhere about the same time that, under the influence of Dostoyevsky and certain foreign poets such as Baudelaire and Edgar Allan Poe, that I began to be an enthusiastic admirer of modernism, but less of the decadents than of the symbolists (even then I kept the two separate). A volume of my poems which appeared at the beginning of the nineties, received the title "Symbols"; I believe that I was the first who introduced this word into Russian literature. "What symbols? What are symbols?" I was asked at every turn.

After leaving the University, I went in the summer to the Caucasus. At Borshom, quite by chance, I made the acquaintance of Zinaida Nikolayevna Hippus, and soon afterwards I made her a proposal of marriage. In the following winter I married her at Tiflis, and returned with her to Petrograd.

I will make the rest of this briefer, for I am not writing memoirs, but only an autobiographical sketch. I have neither the intention nor the ability to depict the course of my inner development, which, I believe, is not yet completed.

In the spring after my marriage, my mother died. The death of my mother, a severe illness of my wife, and several other crises in my private life, were the causes of the religious change through which I passed. I am often reproached with having derived my religious ideas schemati-

cally and from books. This opinion is false, and is perhaps due to defects in my literary ability.

I can assert with a clear conscience: All religious ideas expressed by me, come neither from books nor from foreign influences, but from my own experiences, for I have experienced them all myself.

In my first collection of critical essays: "On the causes of the decay and on the new tendencies in Russian literature," I endeavoured to establish the doctrines of symbolism not so much from an aesthetic as from a religious point of view.

In the following years I travelled a great deal. I lived for some time in Rome, Florence and Taormina, besides going to Athens and Constantinople. My second collection of essays, "The Eternal Companions," dates back to this period. I also translated a series of Greek tragedies.

In the year 1893 I began the trilogy "Christ and Anti-Christ," at which I worked for nearly 12 years. For a long time I could nowhere dispose of "Julian the Apostate"; no editor would take it. At last, with great difficulty, I had it accepted by the "Northern Herald"; they really took the novel out of pity. Altogether I had an unfriendly reception in Russian literature, and even to-day I have to put up with many hostilities. I might celebrate a 25 years' anniversary of pitiless persecutions on the part of the Russian critics.

Between "Leonardo" and "Peter and Alexey" I wrote my study of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. For a long time I could not get this work accepted anywhere, either. I was on the point of despairing, when finally it was taken by the "Art World," that refuge for all the "persecuted and rejected."

In order to make the preliminary studies for "Peter and Alexis," I undertook a journey to the sectarians and old believers beyond the Volga to Kershets, Semyonov, and to the "Clear Lake," where the legendary "Invisible Town" of Kitesh is situated. In the woods by the shore of the lake I spent St. John's Eve in conversation with the pilgrims and preachers, who on that night flock together there from the whole of Russia. Later I was told that many of them look back with pleasure to their meeting with me.

At the end of the nineties we founded the Religious-philosophical Union. I may mention that the first stimulus proceeded from Zinaida Hippus. She also founded the periodical entitled "The New Path."

When the Union was suspended by Pobyednostsev, I visited the Archbishop Antonius (he died quite recently), to appeal for his help in our undertaking. He refused the request, because he said he could undertake nothing against the temporal authority.

During my visit to the archbishop's monastery,

I slipped on a dark staircase and fell through a glass roof into a ventilator. I sustained a few injuries, but I might easily have broken my neck. I saw a symbolical meaning in this fall. I realised that my overtures towards the orthodox church could not lead to any good results.

In the summer of 1904 I travelled with my wife to Yasnaya Polyana. Tolstoy received us in a very friendly manner. We stayed with him overnight and discussed religious questions at great length. When we took our leave, he looked at me searchingly with his good-natured, rather uncanny little bear-like eyes, the eyes of the forest man, Uncle Yeroshka, and said: "I have heard that you do not like me. I am glad that it is not so. . . ."

I already had a feeling that I had not been quite fair to him in my book, and that in spite of the radical variance of our opinions, I am, after all, more fond of Tolstoy than of Dostoyevsky.

Everything that I reflected upon, and above all, that I experienced, in the revolutionary years of 1905-06, was of critical importance in its effect on the course of my inner development. I realised, and, once again, not abstractly, but with body and soul, that in Russia, orthodoxy and the existing order of things are inseparably united, and that before both—autocracy and orthodoxy—are rejected together, a new conception of Christianity must first be arrived at.

After the Moscow revolt I moved with my wife to Paris. Here, conjointly with Dmitri Filosofov, we published the volume "Tsar and Revolution" in French. My drama, "Paul I.," which was composed at Paris in 1908, was confiscated immediately on its appearance. It was not until four years later that the charge against me of "insolent contempt of the Tsar's authority" was dropped. My acquittal was due only to a lucky chance.

In the same year, on my return to Russia, the manuscript of my novel, "Alexander I." was taken away from me at the frontier station of Wirballen.

In Paris I became closely acquainted with several Russian revolutionaries. I was, and still am, of the opinion that they are the best of all the Russians whom I have ever seen in my life. Our mutual advances were based not merely upon political, but also upon religious considerations. In my intercourse with them I saw clearly before my eyes, and touched, as it were, with my hands, the connection between religion and the Russian revolution, and I experienced what I afterwards repeated so often: the possibility of a new religious order of society, the intimate connection between the political liberation of Russia and its religious destinies.

FYODOR SOLOGUB : THE TINY MAN.

I.

Yakov Alexeyevitch Saranin scarcely reached medium size ; his wife, Aglaya Nikiforovna, who came of trades-folk, was tall and capacious. Even now, in the first year after their marriage, the twenty-year-old woman was so corpulent that beside her tiny and lean husband, she seemed a very giantess.

“ What if she gets still bigger ? ” thought Yakov Alexeyevitch. He thought this, although he had married for love—of her and of the dowry.

The difference in the size of husband and wife not seldom evoked derisive remarks from their acquaintances. These frivolous jests poisoned Saranin’s peace of mind and embarrassed Aglaya Nikiforovna.

Once, after an evening spent with his colleagues, when he had to hear no small amount of banter, Saranin returned home thoroughly out of temper.

Lying in bed beside Aglaya, he growled and began wrangling with his wife. Aglaya lazily and unwillingly replied in a drowsy voice : “ What am I to do ? It’s not my fault.”

She was of a very placid and peaceful temper.

Saranin growled : “ Don’t gorge yourself with meat, and don’t gobble up so much floury food ; the whole day you’re stuffing yourself with sweets.”

“ Then I can’t eat anything, if I’ve got a good appetite,” said Aglaya. “ When I was single, I had a better appetite still !”

“ So I should think ! Why, you ate up an ox at one go, didn’t you ?”

“ It’s impossible to eat up an ox at one go,” replied Aglaya, placidly.

She quickly fell asleep, but Saranin could not get to sleep in this strange autumn night.

For a long time he tossed about from side to side.

When a Russian cannot sleep, he thinks about things. Saranin, too, devoted himself to that activity, which was so little peculiar to him at any other time. For he was an official,—and so had little reason to think about this and that.

“ There must be some means or other,” pondered Saranin. “ Science makes marvellous discoveries every day ; in America they make people noses of any shape they like, and put a new skin on their faces. That’s the kind of operations they perform,—they bore holes in the skull, they cut into the bowels and the heart, and sew them up again. Can’t there be a way of making me grow, or else of reducing Aglaya’s size ? Some

secret way or other? But how to find it? How? You won't find it by lying here. Even water won't flow under a stone at rest. But to look for this secret remedy. . . . It may be that the inventor is actually walking the streets and looking for a purchaser. Yes, of course. He can't advertise in the papers. . . . But in the streets hawking things round, selling what he likes from under his coat,—that's quite possible. He goes round and offers it on the quiet. If anyone wants a secret remedy, he doesn't stay tossing about in bed."

Having arrived at this conclusion, Saranin began to dress quickly, mumbling to himself:

"Twelve o'clock at night. . ."

He was not afraid that he would wake his wife. He knew that Aglaya slept soundly.

"Just like a huxter," he said aloud.—"Just like a clod-hopper," he thought to himself.

He finished dressing and went into the street. He had not the slightest wish for slumber. His spirits were light, and he was in the mood peculiar to a seeker of adventure when he has some new and interesting experience before him.

The law-abiding official, who had lived quietly and colourlessly for the third of a century, suddenly felt within him the spirit of a venturesome and untrammelled hunter in wild deserts,—a hero of Cooper or Mayne-Reid.

But when he had gone a few steps along his

accustomed road,—towards his office, he stopped and reflected. Wherever was he to go? All was still and peaceful, so peaceful that the street seemed to be the corridor of a huge building, ordinary, free from danger, shut off from all that was external and abrupt. The house-porters were dozing by the doors. At the cross-roads, a constable made his appearance. The street lamps glimmered. The paving-stones and the cobbles in the road shone faintly with the dampness of rain that had recently fallen.

Saranin considered, and in his unruffled hesitation he turned to the right and walked straight ahead.

II.

At a point where two streets crossed, in the lamp-light, he saw a man walking towards him, and his heart throbbed with a joyful foreboding.

It was an odd figure. A gown of bright colours, with a broad girdle. A large speckled cap, with a pointed tip. A saffron-coloured tuft of beard, long and narrow. White, glittering teeth. Dark, piercing eyes. Slipped feet.

“An Armenian!” thought Saranin at once.

The Armenian came up to him and said :

“My dear man, what are you looking for at this hour of the night? You should go and sleep,

or else visit the fair ladies. If you like, I will guide you there."

"No, my own fair lady is ample enough for me," said Saranin.

And confidently he acquainted the Armenian with his trouble.

The Armenian showed his teeth and made a neighing sound.

"Big wife, tiny husband,—to kiss, put up a ladder. Phew, not good!"

"What would be good for it, then?"

"Come with me. I will help a good man."

For a long time they went through the quiet, corridor-like streets, the Armenian in front, Saranin behind.

From lamp to lamp the Armenian underwent an odd change. In the darkness he grew, and the farther he went from the lamp, the hugher did he become. Sometimes it seemed as if the sharp tip of his cap rose up higher than the houses into the cloudy sky. Then, as he approached the light, he became smaller, and by the lamp he assumed his former dimensions, and seemed a simple and ordinary hawker of gowns. And, strange to say, Saranin felt no astonishment at this phenomenon. He was in such a trustful mood that the gaudy wonders of the Arabian Nights themselves would have seemed ordinary to him, even as the tedious passage of workaday drabness.

At the door of a house, quite an ordinary five-

storied yellow building, they stopped. The lamp at the door clearly outlined its unpretentious sign. Saranin noticed :

“ No. 41.”

They entered the courtyard. To the staircase of the back wing. The staircase was in semi-darkness. But on the door before which the Armenian stopped, fell the light of a small dim lamp, and Saranin distinguished the figures :

“ No. 43.”

The Armenian thrust his hand into his pocket, drew from thence a tiny bell, of the kind that is used in country-houses to summon the servants, and rang it. Clear and silvery was the sound of the little bell.

The door opened immediately. Behind the door stood a bare-footed lad, well-favoured, brown-skinned, with very full-coloured lips. His white teeth glistened because he kept smiling, now joyfully, now mockingly. And it seemed that he was smiling the whole time. The comely lad's eyes gleamed with a greeny lustre. He was all lithe as a cat and blurred as the phantom of a peaceful nightmare. He looked at Saranin and smiled. Saranin felt uneasy.

They entered. The lad closed the door, bending forward lithely and adroitly, and went before them into the passage, bearing a lamp in his hand. He opened a door, and again that blurred movement and mirth.

An uncanny, dark narrow room, along the walls of which were arranged cupboards with certain alembics and phials. There was a strangely irritating and perplexing odour.

The Armenian lit the lamp, opened a cupboard, fumbled about there and fetched down an alembic with a greenish liquid.

“Good droplets,” he said; “you give one drop in a glass of water, go to sleep quietly, and not wake up.”

“No, I don’t want that,” said Saranin, vexedly. “You don’t think I’ve come for that!”

“My dear man,” said the Armenian in a wheedling voice, “you will take another wife, after your own size, very simple matter.”

“I don’t want to,” cried Saranin.

“Well, don’t shout,” the Armenian cut him short. “Why are you getting angry, dear man? You are spoiling your temper for nothing. You don’t want it, then don’t take it. I’ll give you other things. But they are dear, ah, ah, dear.”

The Armenian, squatting down on his haunches, which gave his long figure a comical appearance, fetched out a square-shaped bottle. In it glittered a transparent liquid. The Armenian said softly, with a mysterious look:

“You drink one drop, you lose a pound; you drink forty drops, you lose forty pounds’ weight. A drop, a pound. A drop, a rouble. Count the drops, give the roubles.”

Saranin was inflamed with joy.

"How much shall I want, now?" pondered Saranin. "She must be about two hundred pounds, for certain. If she loses a hundred and twenty pounds, she'll be quite a tiny little woman. That will be fine!"

"Give me a hundred and twenty drops."

The Armenian shook his head.

"You want a lot, that will be bad!"

Saranin flared up.

"Well, that's my business."

The Armenian looked at him searchingly.

"Count out the money."

Saranin took out his pocket-book.

"All to-day's winnings, and you've got to add some of your own as well," he reflected.

The Armenian in the meantime took out a cut-glass phial, and began to count out the drops.

A sudden doubt was enkindled in Saranin's mind.

A hundred and twenty roubles, a tidy sum of money. And supposing he cheats.

"They really will work?" he asked, undecidedly.

"We don't sell a pig in a poke," said the master of the house. "I'll show you now how it works. Gaspar—" he shouted.

The same bare-footed lad entered. He had on a red jacket and short blue trousers. His brown legs were bare to above the knees. They were

shapely, handsome, and moved adroitly and swiftly.

The Armenian beckoned with his hand. Gaspar speedily threw aside his garments. He went up to the table.

The lights dimly shone upon his yellow body, shapely, powerful, beautiful. His smile was subservient, depraved. His eyes were dark, with blue marks under them.

The Armenian said :

“ Drink the pure drops, and it will work at once. Mix with water or wine, and then slowly, you will not notice it with your eyes. Mix it badly, and it will act in jerks, not nicely.”

He took a narrow glass with indentations, poured out some of the liquid and gave it to Gaspar. Gaspar, with the gesture of a spoilt child who is being given sweets, drank the liquid to the dregs, threw his head backwards, licked out the last sweet drops with his long, pointed tongue which was like a serpent's fangs, and immediately, before Saranin's eyes, he began to get smaller. He stood erect, looked at Saranin, laughed, and changed in size like a puppet bought at a fair, which shrivels up when they remove the wind from it.

The Armenian took him by the elbow and placed him on the table. The lad was about the size of a candle. He danced and performed antics.

“What will happen to him now?” asked Saranin.

“My dear man, we will make him grow again,” replied the Armenian.

He opened a cupboard and from the top shelf he took another vessel likewise of strange shape. The liquid in it was green. Into a tiny goblet, the size of a thimble, the Armenian poured a little of the liquid. He gave it to Gaspar.

Again Gaspar drank it, just as the first time.

With the unwavering slowness of water filling a bath, the naked lad became bigger and bigger. Finally, he reached his previous dimensions.

The Armenian said :

“Drink with wine, with water, with milk, drink it with whatever you please, only do not drink it with Russian kvas, or you will begin to moult badly.”

III.

A few days elapsed.

Saranin beamed with joy. He smiled mysteriously.

He was waiting for an opportunity.

He was biding his time.

Aglaya complained of a headache.

“I have a remedy,” said Saranin. “It acts wonderfully.”

"No remedies are any good," said Aglaya, with a sour grimace.

"No, but this one will be. I got it from an Armenian."

He spoke so confidently that Aglaya had faith in the efficacy of the Armenian's medicine.

"Oh, all right then ; give it me."

He produced the phial.

"Is it nasty?" asked Aglaya.

"It's delightful stuff to taste, and it acts wonderfully. Only it will cause you a little inconvenience."

Aglaya made a wry face.

"Drink, drink."

"Can it be taken in Madeira?"

"Yes."

"Then you drink the Madeira with me," said Aglaya, prompted by caprice.

Saranin poured out two glasses of Madeira, and into his wife's glass he poured the admixture.

"I feel a bit cold," said Aglaya softly and sluggishly. "I should like my wrap."

Saranin ran to fetch the wrap. When he returned, the glasses stood as before. Aglaya sat down and smiled.

He laid the wrap round her.

"I feel as if I were better," said she. "Am I to drink?"

"Drink, drink," cried Saranin. "Your health!"

He seized his glass. They drank.

She burst out laughing.

"What is it?" asked Saranin.

"I changed the glasses. You'll have the inconvenience, not me."

He shuddered. He grew pale.

"What have you done?" he shouted in desperation.

Aglaya laughed. To Saranin her laughter seemed loathsome and cruel.

Suddenly he remembered that the Armenian had an antidote.

He ran to find the Armenian.

"He'll make me pay dearly for it," he thought, gingerly. "But what of the money! Let him take all, if only he saves me from the horrible effects of this nostrum."

IV.

But obviously an evil destiny was flinging itself upon Saranin.

On the door of the lodging where the Armenian lived, there hung a lock. In desperation Saranin seized the bell. A wild hope inspirited him. He rang desperately.

Behind the door the bell tinkled loudly, distinctly, clearly, with that inexorable clearness

peculiar to the ringing of bells in empty lodgings.

Saranin ran to the house-porter. He was pallid. Small drops of sweat, exceedingly small, like dew on a cold stone, broke out on his face and specially on his nose.

He dashed hastily into the porter's lodge and cried :

“Where is Khalatyantz?”

The porter in charge, a listless, black-bearded bumpkin, was drinking tea from a saucer. He eyed Saranin askance. He asked with unruffled calm :

“And what do you want of him?”

Saranin looked blankly at the porter and did not know what to say.

“If you've got any business with him,” said the porter, looking at Saranin suspiciously, “then, sir, you had better go away. For as he's an Armenian, keep out of the way of the police.”

“Yes, but where is the cursed Armenian?” cried Saranin, in desperation. “From number 43?”

“There is no Armenian,” replied the porter. “There was, it's true, I won't deny it, but there isn't now.”

“Where is he, then?”

“He's gone away.”

“Where to?” shouted Saranin.

“Who can say?” replied the porter, placidly.

“He got a foreign passport and went abroad.”

Saranin turned pale.

"Understand," he said in a trembling voice, "I must get hold of him, come what may."

He burst out crying.

The porter looked at him sympathetically. He said :

"Why, don't upset yourself, sir. If you do want the cursed Armenian so badly, why then, take a trip abroad yourself, go to the registration office there, and you'll find him by the address."

Saranin did not consider the absurdity of what the porter said. He became cheerful.

He at once rushed home, flew like a hurricane into the local office, and requested the man in charge to make him out a foreign passport without delay. But suddenly he remembered :

"But where am I to go?"

V.

The cursed nostrum did its evil work with fateful slowness, but inexorably. Saranin became smaller and smaller every day. His clothes dangled round him like a sack.

His acquaintances marvelled. They said :

"How is it that you seem a bit smaller. Have you stopped wearing heels?"

"Yes, and a bit thinner."

“You’re working too hard.”

“Fancy taking it out of yourself like that!”

Finally, on meeting him, they would sigh :

“Whatever is the matter with you?”

Behind his back, Saranin’s acquaintances began to make fun of him.

“He’s growing downwards.”

“He’s trying to break the record for smallness.”

His wife noticed it somewhat later. Being always in her sight, he grew smaller too gradually for her to see anything. She noticed it by the baggy look of his clothes.

At first she laughed at the queer diminution in size of her husband. Then she began to lose her temper.

“This is going from bad to worse,” she said. “And to think that I actually married such a midget.”

Soon all his clothes had to be re-made,—all the old ones were dropping off him; his trousers reached his ears, and his hat fell on to his shoulder.

The head porter happened to go into the kitchen.

“What’s up here?” he asked the cook, sternly.

“Is that any business of mine?” the plump and comely Matrena was on the point of shouting irascibly, but she remembered just in time and said :

“There’s nothing up here at all. Everything’s as usual.”

“Why, your master’s beginning to carry on like anything. By rights he ought to report himself to the police,” said the porter very sternly.

The watch-chain on his paunch heaved indignantly.

Matrena suddenly sat down on a box and burst out crying.

“Don’t talk about it, Sidor Pavloyitch,” she began. “We’ve really been wondering what’s the matter with him,—we can’t make it out.”

“What’s the reason? What’s the cause?” exclaimed the porter, indignantly. “Can such things be?”

“The only comfort about it,” said the cook, sobbing, “is, that he eats less.”

The longer he lived, the smaller he got.

And the servants, and the tailors, and all with whom Saranin had to come in contact, treated him with unconcealed contempt. He would race along to business, tiny, hardly managing to lug his huge portfolio with both hands, and behind him he heard the malicious laughter of the hall-porter, the door-keeper, cabmen, urchins.

“Little shrimp,” the head porter would remark.

Saranin had to swallow many a bitter draught.

He lost his wedding ring. His wife made a fuss about it. She wrote to her parents in Moscow.

“Curse that Armenian!” thought Saranin.

Often he called to mind the Armenian counting the drops, pouring them out.

“Whew!” exclaimed Saranin.

“Never mind, my dear, it was my mistake, I won’t do anything for it.”

Saranin also went to the doctor, who examined him with jocular remarks. He found nothing wrong.

Saranin would go to visit somebody or other,—the porter did not let him in at once.

“Who may you be?”

Saranin told him.

“I don’t know,” said the porter. “Mr. So-and-so don’t receive such people.”

VI.

At business, in his department, they began by eyeing him askance and jeering. Especially the younger men.

Then they started murmuring, expressing disapproval.

The hall-porter began to remove Saranin’s overcoat with open repugnance.

“There’s a weedy little official for you,” he

muttered. "What sort of Christmas box are you likely to get from him?"

And to keep up his prestige, Saranin was compelled to give bigger and more frequent tips than before. But that availed little. The porters took the money, but they looked at Saranin suspiciously.

Saranin explained to someone among his colleagues that an Armenian had landed him in this mess. The rumour of the Armenian affair rapidly spread throughout the department. It found its way into other departments as well. . .

On one occasion the manager of the department ran up against the tiny official in the passage. He looked at him in amazement. He said nothing. He went into his room.

Then they considered that they had better inform him. The manager asked :

"Has this been going on long?"

The assistant manager wavered.

"It's a pity you didn't draw attention to it at the time," said the manager, sourly, without waiting for an answer. "Strange that I knew nothing about it. I'm greatly put out."

He sent for Saranin.

When Saranin reached the manager's room, all the officials looked at him in severe condemnation.

With a beating heart Saranin entered the superintendent's room. He still clung to a faint hope, the hope that His Excellence intended to

give him a particularly flattering order, availing himself of his small size. He might detail him for the Universal Exhibition, or some secret duty or other. But at the very first sound of the departmental manager's voice, this hope dispersed like smoke.

"Sit down here," said His Excellency, pointing to a chair.

Saranin clambered up as best he could. The manager irately gazed at the official's legs dangling in the air. He asked :

"Mr. Saranin, are you acquainted with the Civil Service regulations as defined by the Government?"

"Your Excellency," stammered Saranin, laying, as in prayer, his little hands upon his breast.

"Why have you done this?" asked the manager.

"Believe me, Your Excellency. . ."

"Why have you done this?" repeated the Manager.

But Saranin could not say another word. He burst into tears. He had become very lachrymose latterly.

The manager looked at him. He shook his head. He began very sternly :

"Mr. Saranin, I have summoned you in order to inform you that your inexplicable conduct is to be regarded as thoroughly insufferable."

"But, Your Excellency, I think I've always

properly. . .” stammered Saranin, “and as for my stature . . .”

“Yes, that’s just it.”

“But I am not responsible for this misfortune.”

“I cannot judge to what extent this strange and unseemly occurrence has come upon you through misfortune, and to what extent you are not responsible for it, but I am bound to tell you, that as far as the department in my charge is concerned, your extraordinary diminution in size has become positively scandalous. The most equivocal rumours are already circulating in the town. I cannot judge of their accuracy, but I know that these rumours explain your conduct by associating it with agitations for Armenian independence. You will admit that the department cannot be turned into a headquarters for developing Armenian intrigues, directed towards the diminution of the Russian Empire. We cannot keep officials who conduct themselves so strangely.”

Saranin leaped up from his chair, and tremblingly whimpered :

“A freak of nature, Your Excellency.”

“It is peculiar, but the interests of the service . . .”

And again he repeated the same question :

“Why have you done this?”

“Your Excellency, I myself do not know how it has come to pass.”

“What instincts! You are flaunting the smallness of your stature, when you could easily hide it under any lady’s skirt, if I may be allowed to say so. This cannot be tolerated.”

“I never did this,” wailed Saranin.

But the manager did not hear. He went on :

“I even heard that you are doing this out of sympathy for the Japanese. But a limit must be recognised in all things.”

“How could I ever do that, Your Excellency?”

“I do not know. But I beg of you to desist. You can be retained in the service, but only in the provinces, and this will be immediately cancelled, if you do not resume your customary dimensions. For the purpose of recruiting your health, you are granted four months’ leave. I must request you not to make your appearance in the department any more. Any papers that are indispensable to you will be sent to your house. Good morning.”

“Your Excellency, I am capable of working. Why this leave?”

“You will take it because of illness.”

“But, Your Excellency, I am quite well.”

“No more, if you please.”

They gave Saranin leave for four months.

VII.

Before long, Aglaya's parents arrived. It was after lunch. During lunch, Aglaya had waxed very merry at her husband's expense. Then she went off to her room.

He went timidly into his study,—it seemed huge to him now,—scrambled up on to the ottoman, curled himself up in a corner and began crying. Burdensome perplexities tormented him.

Why should just he be overwhelmed by such a misfortune? It was dreadful, unheard of.

What utter folly.

He sobbed and whispered despairingly :

“ Why, oh, why did I do it?”

Suddenly he heard familiar voices in the front room. He shook with horror. On tiptoe he crept to the washing-stand,—they should not see his tear-stained eyes. Even to wash himself was difficult,—he had to stand on a chair.

The guests had already entered the drawing-room. Saranin received them. He bowed, and in a piping voice made some unintelligible remark. Aglaya's father looked at him blankly with wide-open eyes. He was big, stout, bull-necked and red-faced. Aglaya was at his heels.

He stood still before his son-in-law, and with legs wide apart, he eyed him attentively ; he took

Saranin's hand cautiously, bent forward and said, lowering his voice :

“ We have come to see you.”

It was obvious that his intention was to behave himself tactfully. He fidgeted with his feet on the floor.

From behind his back, Aglaya's mother, a lean and malicious person, pushed forward. She exclaimed shrilly :

“ Where is he, where? Show him to me, Aglaya, show me this Pygmalion.”

She looked over Saranin's head. She purposely did not notice him. The flowers on her hat waggled strangely. She went straight up to Saranin. He squeaked and hopped on one side.

Aglaya began to cry and said :

“ There he is, mama.”

“ I'm here, mama,” squeaked Saranin, and shuffled his feet.

“ You villain, what have you done to yourself? Why have you shrivelled up so?”

The servant-girl giggled.

“ Don't you giggle at your master, my good girl.”

Aglaya reddened.

“ Mama, let's go into the drawing-room.”

“ No; tell me, you villain, for what purpose you've got so small?”

“ Now then, mother, wait a bit,” the father interrupted her.

She turned on her husband as well.

“Didn’t I tell you not to let her marry a man without a beard. See, it’s turned out just as I said.”

The father looked cautiously at Saranin and did his utmost to change the conversation to politics.

“The Japanese,” he said, “are of no great size to speak of, but to all appearance they are a brainy race, and even, you might almost say, enterprising.”

VIII.

And Saranin grew tinier and tinier. He could now walk freely under the table. And each day he became smaller still. He had not yet taken complete advantage of his leave, but he did not go to the office. They had not yet made preparations to travel anywhere.

Aglaya sometimes made fun of him, sometimes she cried and said :

“Where shall I take you in that state? The shame and disgrace of it!”

To pass from the study to the dining-room had become a journey of quite respectable proportions. And to climb up on a chair in the bargain. . .

Still, weariness was in itself agreeable. It resulted in a good appetite and the hope of growing. Saranin now pinned all his faith upon food. The amount he consumed was out of all proportion to his diminutive dimensions. But he did not grow. On the contrary,—he decreased and decreased in size. The worst of it was that this decrease in size sometimes proceeded in jerks and at the most inopportune times. As if he were performing tricks.

Aglaya thought of passing him off as a boy, and entering him at a school. She made her way to the nearest one. But the conversation she had with the Headmaster discouraged her.

They demanded documents. It turned out that the plan was impracticable.

With an expression of extreme perplexity the Headmaster said to Aglaya :

“ We cannot take a court councillor as pupil. What could we do with him? Suppose the teacher told him to stand in the corner, and he said : I am a Knight of St. Anne. It would be very awkward.”

Aglaya assumed a pleading expression and began to implore.

The Headmaster remained inexorable.

“ No,” he said stubbornly, “ we cannot take an official into the school. There is nowhere a single clause in which such a case is provided for. And it would be extremely awkward to approach

the authorities with such a proposition. They wouldn't hear of it. It might lead to considerable unpleasantness. No, it can't be done at all. Apply to the controller, if you so desire."

But Aglaya could not make up her mind to go to the authorities.

IX.

One day Aglaya received a visit from a young man, whose hair was combed back with very shiny smoothness. He made an extremely gallant curtsey. He introduced himself thus :

"I represent the firm of Strigal and Co. A first-class store at the very smartest centre or aristocratic shopping in the West End. We have a huge quantity of clients in the best and highest society."

With a view to all emergencies, Aglaya made eyes at the representative of the illustrious firm. With a languid gesture of her plump arm she invited him to take a chair. She sat with her back to the light. Leaning her head on one side, she made ready to listen.

The young man with the shinily combed hair continued :

"We have been informed that your husband has vouchsafed to display originality in his choice

of a diminutive size for himself. For this reason, the firm, anticipating the very latest movements in ladies' and gentlemen's fashions, has the honour, madam, of proposing, as an advertisement, to provide the gentleman free of charge with suits cut according to the very finest Parisian model."

"For nothing?" asked Aglaya, listlessly.

"Not only for nothing, madam, but even with payment to your own advantage, only under one trifling condition which can easily be fulfilled."

In the meantime, Saranin, hearing that he was the subject of the discussion, betook himself into the drawing-room. He strolled round the young man with the shinily arranged hair. He coughed and clattered with his heels. He was very annoyed that the representative of the firm of Strigal and Co. paid not the slightest attention to him.

At last he darted up to the young man and squeaked loudly :

"I suppose they didn't tell you I was at home?"

The representative of the illustrious firm stood up. He gave a gallant curtsy. He sat down again, and, turning to Aglaya, said :

"Only one trifling condition."

Saranin snorted contemptuously. Aglaya burst out laughing. Her eyes sparkled inquisitively, and she said :

"Well, tell me, what is the condition?"

"Our condition is that the gentleman would consent to sit in the window of our store in the capacity of a living advertisement."

Aglaya gave a malicious laugh.

"Splendid! At any rate, he'll be out of my sight."

"I won't consent," squeaked Saranin, in a piercing voice. "I cannot agree to such a thing. I,—a court councillor and a knight, sitting in a shop-window as an advertisement,—why, I think it's absolutely ridiculous."

"Be quiet," shouted Aglaya, "it's not you they're asking."

"What, not asking me?" wailed Saranin. "How much longer am I to put up with strangers?"

"Oh no, sir, you're making a mistake!" chimed in the young man amiably. "Our firm has no connection with aliens. Our employees are all either orthodox or Lutherans from Riga. And we have no Jews."

"I don't want to sit in the window" screamed Saranin.

He stamped his feet. Aglaya seized him by the arm. She pulled him towards the bed-room.

"Where are you dragging me?" screamed Saranin. "I don't want to, leave go."

"I'll quieten you," shouted Aglaya.

She locked the door.

"I'll give you a sound beating" she said through her teeth.

She started striking him. He wriggled powerlessly in her mighty arms.

"I've got you in my power, you pigmy. What I want I'll do. I can shove you into my pocket,—how dare you oppose me! I don't care for your rank, I'll thrash you within an inch of your life."

"I'll complain about it," squeaked Saranin.

But he soon realised the uselessness of resistance. He was so very small, and Aglaya had clearly resolved to put her whole strength into it.

"All right then, all right," he wailed, "I'll go into Strigal's window. I'll sit there,—and bring disgrace on you. I'll put on all my decorations."

Aglaya laughed.

"You'll put on what Strigal gives you," she shouted.

She lugged her husband into the drawing-room. She threw him before the young man and shouted :

"Take him! Carry him off this very moment. And the money in advance. Every month!"

Her words were hysterical outcries.

The young man produced a pocket-book. He counted out two hundred roubles.

"Not enough!" shouted Aglaya.

The young man smiled. He took out a hundred rouble note in addition.

“More than this I am not authorised to give,” he remarked, amiably. “At the end of a month, pray receive the next instalment.”

Saranin ran about the room.

“In the window! In the window!” he kept screaming. “Cursed Armenian, what did you do to me?”

And suddenly at that very moment he shrank by about three inches.

X.

Useless were Saranin's tears and his lamentations?—what did Strigal and his associates care about them?

They paid. They effectuated their rights. The ruthless rights of capital.

The power of capital provides even the court councillor and knight with a position completely in accordance with his precise dimensions, but not in the least harmonising with his pride. Dressed up in the latest fashion, the pigmy runs to and fro in the window of the fashion emporium, —now feasting his gaze on the fair ladies of such colossal size!—now spitefully threatening the gleeful children with his fists.

There was a mob round the windows of Strigal and Co.

The assistants in Strigal and Co.'s store trod on each other's toes.

Strigal and Co.'s workshop was flooded with orders.

Strigal and Co. attain renown.

Strigal and Co. extend their workshops.

Strigal and Co. are rich.

Strigal and Co. buy up houses.

Strigal and Co. are magnanimous; they feed Saranin right royally, they do not stint his wife for money.

Aglaya is already receiving a thousand a month.

More income still has fallen to Aglaya's share.

And acquaintances.

And lovers.

And brilliants.

And carriages.

And a mansion.

Aglaya is merry and contented. She has grown still larger. She wears high-heeled shoes. She selects hats of gigantic proportions.

When she visits her husband, she fondles him and feeds him from her hand like a bird. Saranin in a stumpy-tailed dress-suit trots about with tiny steps on the table in front of her and squeaks something. His voice is as penetrating as the squeak of a gnat. But the words are not audible.

Tiny little folk can speak, but their squeaking is not audible to people of large proportions,—neither to Aglaya, nor to Strigal, nor to any of the company. Aglaya, surrounded by shop-assistants, hears the mannikin's whining and squeaking. She laughs and goes away.

They carry Saranin into the window, where, in a nest of soft materials, a whole lodging is arranged for him, with the open side turned towards the public.

The street urchins see the mannikin sitting down at the table and preparing to write his petitions. His tiny little petitions for his rights, which have been violated by Aglaya, Strigal and Co.

He writes. He knocks against the envelope. The urchins laugh.

In the meanwhile, Aglaya is sitting in her splendid carriage. She is going for a jaunt before lunch.

XI.

Neither Aglaya, nor Strigal and Co. thought how it would all end. They were satisfied with the present. It seemed as if there would be no end to the golden shower which flowed down upon

them. But the end came. Of the most ordinary kind. Such as might have been expected.

Saranin diminished continually. Every day they dressed him in new suits,—always smaller.

And suddenly, in the eyes of the marvelling shop-assistants, just as he was putting on some new trousers, he became excessively minute. He tumbled out of the trousers. And he had already become like a pin's head.

A slight draught was blowing. Saranin, minute as a grain of dust, was lifted up in the air. He was twirled round. He mingled with the cloudlets of dust gamboling in the sunbeams. He disappeared.

All search was in vain. Saranin could nowhere be found.

Aglaya, Strigal and Co., the police, the clergy, the authorities,—all were in the greatest perplexity.

How was the disappearance of Saranin to be formulated?

At last, after communication with the Academy of Sciences, they decided to reckon him as dispatched on a special mission for scientific purposes.

Then they forgot about him.

Saranin was finished with.

N. S. SERGEYEV-TSENSKY : THE
DEMIGOD.

AT wealthy Corinth, in the house of Megacles, the highly revered, the minstrels stood and chanted their melodies.

There were two of them—a youth and an old man.

At first the old man sang in a quavering and feeble voice, and the youth accompanied him sadly upon a seven-stringed lyre.

What can the old man be singing about? He sang about the olden time when the sun glowed more ardently, when fruits grew more amply, when wine was more intoxicating. He sang about the olden time, when heroes lived whose places none had come to take. He sang how in the gloomy chasms of Hades rove the mournful shadows of mortals.

A feast was being held in the house of Megacles. On the long couch behind the table the guests reclined and drank thick Cyprus wine from costly goblets.

And none listened to the old man.

But he ceased, and the youthful minstrel began to sing. In a sonorous and powerful voice he sang melodies which no man had hitherto heard.

The melodies had been fashioned by a mighty master, and they celebrated the praises of the proud mind of man.

“Man is a demigod,” ran the words of them.
“but the time will come when he shall be a god.”

“Man is plunged in dreams,” ran the words of them, “but the time will come when the dreams shall be reality.”

“Yonder, amid the glimmering depths of future ages, his gaze is fixed, as if it were riveted there.”

“The time will come when even the young men shall not stammer about what has been.”

“Utterly filled with the present, utterly the creator of the future, unsubmissive and holding sway over all, man shall stand upon earth vanquished by him.”

“And when he has gained sway over all, he shall be a god.”

The final cadences of his voice and the strains of the lyre were just resounding, when the guests of Megacles rose up from the table to gaze upon the minstrel.

And he stood there youthful and comely, with black tresses and a proud glance.

“Who fashioned these melodies?” the guests inquired.

“I heard them,” replied the minstrel, “when I was yet a lad, in my native Eanthus, from Demades, an exile from Athens.”

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On the next day, three rich youths journeyed across the Gulf of Corinth to tiny Eanthus, that they might reverence Demades, even as a demi-god.

“He must be tall as this mast!” said one of them, with eyes flashing.

“He must be mighty as this sea during a tempest!” said the second.

“He must be beautiful as the evening star in yonder sky!” said the third dreamily.

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In tiny Eanthus, Demades the exile from Athens, was pointed out to them.

On a dirty mat in a courtyard sat a decrepit cripple. His head was grey with the remains of dishevelled, matted hair.

With lean and grimy hands he was intently and eagerly searching for vermin in his tattered tunic.

UKRAINIAN :

SHEVTCHENKO'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

Being a letter to the Editor of *Narodnoë Chtenye*
(Reading for the People)

I FULLY appreciate your wish to acquaint the readers of the N.C. with the biographies of those men who through their capabilities and achievements have worked their way upwards from the obscure and inarticulate ranks of the common people. Narratives of this kind—so it seems to me—might rouse many to a realisation of their human dignity, without which all chances of a general development among the lower classes in Russia appear to me impossible. My own destiny, presented in the light of truth, may lead to deeper contemplation, not only on the part of the common man, but also those from whom the masses are so completely dependent; and this should be of profit to both sides. Such, then, is the reason why I propose to reveal in public a few sad facts concerning my life. I should have

desired to present them with the same completeness as that shown by the late S. T. Aksakov in his account of his childhood and youth—all the more so, since the history of my life forms, in part, the history of my native place. But I lack the enterprise to go into all the details. That could be accomplished only by a man who is in possession of inner calm and, as is usual with such men, has become reconciled with the external conditions of his life. All, however, that I can do now to fulfil your wish is to give a concise account of the actual course of my life. When you read these lines, then, I hope you will realise those feelings which oppress my heart and afflict my spirit.

I am the son of Grigor Shevtchenko, villager and serf. I was born on February 25, 1814, at Kereloyetz, a village in the district of Zvenigorod, government of Kiev, upon the estate of a landed proprietor. In my eighth(?) year I lost father and mother, and found shelter with the parish sacristan as a servant-pupil. Such pupils bear the same relationship to the sacristans as the lads who have been apprenticed to craftsmen by their parents or some other authority do to their masters. The master's power over them has no definite limits—they are actually his slaves. They have to perform uncomplainingly all domestic duties, and fulfil every possible caprice on the part of the master himself and the members

of his household. I leave it to your imagination to conjecture what a sacristan—a sorry drunkard, pray consider—could demand of me, and the things that with slavish humility I had to do, not possessing a single being in the world who troubled or could be expected to trouble about my condition. In spite of all this, in the course of two hard years in a so-called school, I had been through the grammar (spelling-primer), the sum-book, and, finally, the psalter. Towards the end of my school course, the sacristan used to send me in his stead to read the psalter for the souls of departed serfs, and was so gracious as to reward me, by way of encouragement, with every tenth kopeck. My help made it possible for my harsh teacher to devote himself, in a higher degree than before, to his favourite occupation, in the company of his friend Jonas Limar, so that on my return from my exploits as precentor I nearly always found the pair dead-drunk. My sacristan treated not only me, but also the rest of the pupils, with harshness, and we all hated him terribly. His senseless truculence caused us to be crafty and revengeful towards him. We used to deceive him on every occasion that offered, and did him all possible mischief. This was the first despot I ever met, and my whole life long he filled me with loathing and contempt for every kind of coercion practised by one man upon another. My childish heart was injured a thousand times

by the products of such a despotical schooling, and I concluded, even as defenceless people are wont to conclude, when their patience is finally broken—with revenge and flight. When I came upon him one day in a state of complete drunkenness I turned upon him his own weapon, the rod, and as far as my childish strength permitted I got even with him for all his cruelty. Among all the chattels of this drunken sacristan, the most precious thing always seemed to me a certain little book with pictures, that is, engravings, truly of wretched workmanship. Whether it was that I could not reckon it a sin, or whether I could not resist the temptation to purloin this rarity, I took it, and ran away by night to the township of Lesyanka.

There I found a new teacher in the person of a painter-deacon, who, as I very soon discovered, differed in his principles and habits very little from my former master. Three days I patiently dragged buckets of water uphill from the river Teketch, and crunched copper dye on an iron disc. On the fourth day I lost patience and ran away to the village of Tarasovka to a sacristan painter who had gained renown in the locality by his effigies of the great martyrs Mikita and Ivan Voyin. To this Apelles I now turned with the firm resolution to overcome all the trials of destiny which at that time seemed to me inseparable from study. I fervently wished to acquire

his skill, if only in a tiny degree. But, alas! Apelles observed my left hand attentively and refused my request point-blank. He informed me, to my bitter sorrow, that I had no aptitude for anything, not even for cobbling or coopering.

So I lost all hope of ever becoming even a medium painter, and with a saddened heart I returned to my native village. I had in view a modest destiny, which, however, my imagination endued with a certain artless bliss. I wished to become, as Homer puts it, the herdsman of stainless flocks, intending, as I roamed on behind the assembled drove, to read at leisure my beloved stolen picture-book. But in this, too, I was unlucky. My estate-owner, who had just come into his paternal heritage, needed a smart lad, and so the ragged scholar-vagrant, having donned just a twill jacket with trousers to match, became a full-blown page-boy.

The discovery of such page-boys is due to the Poles, the civilisers of the Ukraine beyond the Dnieper. The landed proprietors of other nationalities adopted, and still do adopt, from them these page-boys — undeniably an ingenious device. To train up a handy lackey from very childhood means as much in this whilom Cossack region as the subjugation to man's will of the swift-footed reindeer in Lapland. The Polish estate-owners of a former age kept these so-called "Kozatchki" not only as lackeys, but they made

use of them also as musicians and dancers. . . The modern representatives of the illustrious szlachta (Polish nobility), proudly conscious that they are thus enhancing culture, call this their patronage of the Ukrainian national spirit—a proceeding in which, so they allege, their ancestors always distinguished themselves. My master, being a Russianised German, looked at the affair in a more practical way, and patronised my national spirit in his own manner, by assigning me a post in the corner of the ante-chamber and enjoining me to motionless silence, until he should lift his voice and order me to hand him his pipe which stood quite close to him, or to fill a glass with water before his nose. Owing to my innate unruliness I transgressed my master's order by singing melancholy bandit songs in a barely audible voice, or on the sly copying the pictures in the old Russian style, with which my master's rooms were embellished.

My master was a restless man. He was continually travelling, now to Kiev, now to Vilna or St. Petersburg, and he always dragged me in his train, so that I might sit in the ante-chamber to hand him his pipe and other necessities. I cannot say that I then felt my position in life as burdensome to me; only now does it fill me with horror and appears to me like some wild, incoherent dream. Probably many of those who belonged to the Russian nation will be disposed

some day to regard my past life with my eyes. As I roved with my master from one house of call to another, I took advantage of every opportunity to filch a woodcut from the wall, and in this way I brought together a valuable collection. To my particular favourites belong the historical heroes such as Solovey Rozboynik, Kulnev, Platov the Cossack, and others. I should add that it was not the craze for collecting which led me to this, but the invincible desire to produce the most faithful copies possible of these drawings.

One day, at the time of our sojourn in Vilna, December 6, 1829, my master and his wife had gone to a ball at the so-called *ressources* (gatherings of the szlachta) to celebrate the name-day of His Majesty Nikolai Pavlovitch, now resting in God. The house was completely wrapped in slumber. I lit a candle in my solitary room, spread out my stolen treasures, and, selecting Platov the Cossack, began to copy with devotion. The time passed by unnoticed. I had just got to the Cossack offspring who romp about the mighty hoofs of the general's horse, when behind me the door opened, and my master, returning from the ball, entered. He seized me by the ears and gave me a few cuffs—not because of my artistic endeavours (no! to art he paid no attention), but because I might have set fire not only to the building, but to the whole town. On the next

day he ordered the coachman Sidor to give me a sound hiding, and this was carried out with all due zeal.

In the spring of 1832 I completed my eighteenth year. As the hopes which my master had placed in my ability as a lackey had not been justified, he gave in to my unceasing requests and hired me by contract for a period of four years to a guild-master of painting, a certain Shiryayev in St. Petersburg. This Shiryayev united within himself the qualities of the Spartan sacristan, the painter-deacon, and the other sacristan, the cheiromant. Regardless of the pressure which proceeded from his threefold genius, I spent the clear spring nights in the Summer Garden (Lyetny Sad) at St. Petersburg, and made drawings of the statues which embellish that rectilinear structure of Peter the Great. At one of these seances I made the acquaintance of the artist Ivan Maximovitch Soshenko, with whom I still maintain the most sincerely fraternal relations. On the advice of Soshenko, I began to try my hand at water-colour studies from Nature. During my numerous early and smudgy attempts I had a model in the person of Ivan Netchyporenko, a Cossack, another fellow-countryman and friend of mine, and one of our estate-owner's farm-servants. One day the estate-owner noticed my work in Netchyporenko's possession, and it pleased him so much that he

employed me to paint portraits of his mistresses, for which he now and then rewarded me with a whole silver rouble.

In 1837 Soshenko introduced me to V. I. Grigorovitch, secretary of the Academy of Fine Arts, begging him to liberate me from my unhappy lot. Grigorovitch conveyed this request to V. A. Zhukovsky,* the latter made provisional overtures to my master and commissioned K. P. Brulov to paint his portrait, with the object of making it the stakes in a private lottery. The great Brulov immediately expressed his readiness, and in no great length of time he had Zhukovsky's portrait ready. Zhukovsky, with the help of Count Velehorsky, organised a lottery to the amount of 2,500 roubles in coupons, and at this price my liberty was purchased on April 22, 1838.

From that day on, I began to attend the sessions at the Academy of Fine Arts, and soon became one of Brulov's favourite pupils and comrades. In 1844 I attained the dignity of a free artist.

Concerning my first literary attempts, I will merely say that they had their beginning on those clear moonlit nights in the Summer Garden. The stern Ukrainian muse long shunned my

*V. A. Zhukovsky (1783-1852), a prominent Russian poet of the Romantic period, especially famous for his ballads. He was tutor to the future Tsar, Alexander II.

fancy, which had gone astray in the life at school, in my master's ante-chamber, in houses of call, and in town-lodgings. But when the breath of freedom restored to my sentiments the purity of my childhood spent beneath by father's humble roof, she embraced and fondled me—all thanks to her!—in a foreign clime.

Of my early feeble attempts, written in the Summer Garden, only the ballad “Pritchinna” has been printed. When and how I wrote the subsequent verses I would now rather not discuss. The short history of my life which I have indited as a favour to you in the present disjointed narration has cost me more, I must confess, than I would have expected. What a succession of wasted years! And what have I, through my endeavours, redeemed from destiny? To survive with my bare life! Or, at the most, this terrible insight into my past. It is terrible, all the more terrible for me, since my own brothers and sisters—whom I could not bring it upon myself to mention in my narrative—have remained serfs to the present day. Yes, they are serfs to the present day. I remain, etc.,

February 18, 1860.

T.SHEVTCHENKO.

POLISH :

W. GOMULICKI : THE PLOUGHMAN.

THE scene I was gazing at looked like one of Holbein's immortal sketches. A sketch forming the nucleus of the cycle, "The Dance of Death," representing an old villager who is ploughing the hard soil at sunset, while death is urging on his horse. My villager and his plough were likewise floundering along through the clayey soil, and above them the invisible envoy of destruction appeared to be creeping. . . . Only the landscape was different. In Holbein's picture we see clusters of shady trees, roofs of numerous dwellings, picturesque bridle-paths, the turret of a stone-built church, and, on the horizon, the curving line of a mountain chain. A rich, southern nature, full of diversity and solemnity. The setting sun is beautiful and its beams are extended fan-shaped over the horizon, sending their shafts beyond the mountains and trees.

But the Mazurian plain was wearisome and humdrum. The earth, as if it consisted of

widely spilt and somewhat crinkled waves, stretched in a grey, boundless mass of clods to the remotest line of the horizon. A narrow, garnet-coloured strip of distant woods divided it from the horizon which was also grey and only at one spot, close above the wood, slightly tinged with yellow. The yellow tinge was a sign that somewhere yonder behind the ashy curtain of clouds, the sun was dying away. The colouring of the picture was so thin that it would have been possible to paint the whole of it, including the old man ploughing and his pair of lean horses, with Indian ink or sepia,—in the style of those old aquatints, upon which nature is represented without colour, as if it were seen through a piece of blackened glass. The soil, as far as the eye could reach, was cut up into plots, and these girdles, here and there zig-zag, ran lengthwise in various directions, even as the fields differed one from another. Some were completely black, others a brownish red, others again were brightening into a pale ashen colour, which suggested the notion that into his Indian ink the painter had been pouring more and more water. Here and there stood, as if upon guard, a wild pear-tree, isolated, mournful, silent. Here and there the ground was a little hollowed out, and in the cavity, which was clearly damp, grew alders with glistening leaves. The largest patches of green were formed by a few limes and

poplars, which served as a screen behind which the village was concealed.

The existence of the village could be distinguished only by the senses of hearing and smell. The wind, a cold evening wind, which rustled in the dry grass and dishevelled the old ploughman's long grey hair, bore sounds and scents from sequestered human dwellings. There could be heard the dull droning of the bass-viol which was being played at the inn, and the sudden "Ho" which burst from the throat of a tipsy farm-hand. There could be smelt the sharp scent of baked rape-seed and the penetrating odour of coffee, which was being roasted in the kitchen at the parsonage.

There all was joy and bustle, here sorrow and dull silence prevailed. The old man looked as if he were weighed down by the burden of a whole century. His back was arched, his head drooped to the ground, his nose was long, sharp and crooked as the beak of an old falcon. His whole bearing revealed the greatest feebleness and a forcible dragging towards the earth. And the earth seemed to be waiting impatiently for him, alluring him like a siren to her black bosom, reeking with dampness. From beneath his straw hat emerged wisps of grey hair, matted and resembling white ribbons. His projecting chin was covered with the unshaven bristles of his beard. His eyes and cheeks were hollow. His

temples, his face and his twisted neck were intertwined with a hundred wrinkles in a shapeless net, like the zig-zag lines that a moth eats out on the cover of an old book. At every jerk of the horse, the old man staggered, as if he were falling. It was difficult to believe that he was guiding the plough. It might rather be said that the plough was his support and that it was dragging him after it. Every moment that the horses stopped, the plough stopped also, and the old man struggled with an evil-sounding cough. His cough was curiously similar to the muffled echo which can be heard when the nails are being knocked into a coffin. But hardly had his cough abated than the horses were plodding on again, and the glistening iron cut its way into the earth, throwing up black clods to the right and to the left. The ploughman did not think of resting; his gaze hovered from the earth to the horizon, comparing the length of the paths which the plough and the sun still had to traverse. His powerful lips and toothless jaws were moving as though they were chewing something up. He chewed the words which broke heavily away from his mouth. The whisper of his voice was carried to me from time to time. The old man was saying to himself: "My ears have grown deaf; my eyes have lost their sight. Merciful Jesus, have pity on me. . . . My feet can no longer move, my life is coming to an end. . . Merciful Jesus, have compassion on me!"

This old man, reciting the litany of the dying, was the one whom I had seen in the town a week before. The district doctor, a surly man who gave advice to the poor people from the window of his carriage the while they stood on the pavement with uncovered heads, remarked to him as he wheezed at the smoke of a pipe : “ To your coffin, gaffer, to your coffin. . . Look at him ! He’s a hundred years old and still he wants to go on living.” But the old villager shook his white head and wailed : “ Ah, kind sir, ah ! ”

When I now saw him at his work, I could not help exclaiming : “ I see that you’ve got well again, gaffer, as you’re following the plough.”

He stood still, panted for breath, and said in a voice that sounded as if it were coming out of a well :

“ Well again ? I follow the plough because the plot must be ploughed over for the winter crop. . . now I’m ploughing about the last two ridges . . . and that’ll be the end of it.”

“ Do you hope to see the harvest ? ”

“ Jesus preserve ! This very week they’ll bury me in the holy soil.”

“ How do you know that ? ”

He raised his eyebrows a little and silently opened his lips, as if he were unusually surprised at this question. Then he shook his head and remarked with emphasis :

“ I know, and that’s enough.”

The horses dragged the plough and the old man a few paces farther. And when the triple team stopped afresh, I asked :

“ But if you do not expect the harvest, why are you ploughing the field?”

This question, too, seemed to be unintelligible to him.

“ Why?” he answered in surprise. “ Not for myself, of course, but for those who will come after me.” And breaking off the conversation, he started shouting at the horses to make them turn to the new, and last strip of the field.

I took leave of the old man and went my way. His words sank deep into my soul. I repeated them to myself until the stars appeared in the sky, and when, before falling asleep, I pondered as ever, upon death, it seemed to me to be something as elusive and as untraceable as the merging of one colour with another in a rainbow.

BOLESŁAW PRUS : FROM THE LEGENDS OF ANCIENT EGYPT.

BEHOLD, how vain are human hopes before the dispensation of the world ! Behold how vain they are before the decrees which the Omnipotent has inscribed with fiery signs upon the heavens.

The aged Rameses, the mighty ruler of Egypt,

was on the point of death. On the breast of the monarch, before whose voice millions had trembled for half a century, had fallen a stifling phantom which was draining the blood from his heart, the strength from his arms, and, at intervals, even the consciousness from his brain. Like a fallen cedar the great Pharaoh lay upon the skin of an Indian tiger, his feet covered with the triumphal robe of the King of Ethiopia. And stern even to himself, he summoned the wisest physician from the temple at Carnac, and said :

“ I know that thou art acquainted with potent medicines, which either slay or heal forthwith. Prepare one of them meet for my sickness, and let me end at once . . . thus or otherwise.”

The physician hesitated.

“ Consider, O Rameses,” he whispered, “ that from the moment of thy descending out of the high heavens, the Nile has ebbed a hundred times ; can I then administer to thee a medicine, uncertain even for the youngest among thy warriors?”

Rameses raised himself to a sitting posture upon his couch.

“ It must needs be that my sickness is great,” he exclaimed, “ since thou, O priest, makest bold to bestow counsels upon me ! Be silent and fulfil what I have commanded. For Horus, my thirty-year-old grandson and successor, is yet alive ; Egypt can have no other ruler, if he ascend not the chariot and raise not the spear.”

When the priest with trembling hand had administered the dire medicine to him, Rameses drank it, as one parched with thirst drinks a cup of water; then he called unto him the most renowned astrologer of Thebes, and commanded him to relate what the stars revealed, without dissembling aught.

“Saturn is in conjunction with the Moon,” replied the sage, “and that betokens the death of some member of thy dynasty, O Rameses. Thou hast done ill in drinking the medicine to-day, for empty are human plans before the decrees that the Omnipotent inscribes upon the heavens.”

“Of a surety, then, the stars have heralded my death,” returned Rameses. “And when will it be accomplished?” he asked, turning to the physician.

“Before the setting of the sun, O Rameses, either shalt thou be hale as a rhinoceros, or thy holy ring will be upon the finger of Horus.”

“Lead Horus,” said Rameses, with a voice that was already growing weaker, “into the hall of the Pharaohs; let him there await my last words, and the ring, that there may not be even a moment’s surcease in the wielding of authority.”

Horus began weeping (he had a heart full of compassion) at his grandsire’s approaching death; but that there might be no surcease in the wielding of authority, he forthwith entered into

the hall of the Pharaohs, surrounded by a great company of servants.

He took his seat upon the gallery, the marble steps of which extended downwards even to the river, and, filled with unfathomable sorrows, he gazed around him.

The moon, near which glimmered Saturn, the star of evil portent, was just gilding the bronze-coloured waters of the Nile, painted the shadows of the huge pyramids upon pastures and gardens, and lit up the whole valley for several miles around. In spite of the lateness of the hour, lamps were burning in huts and buildings, and the populace came out from their homes beneath the open sky. Upon the Nile, skiffs were moored in dreams as closely as on a festive day; in palm-forests, on the shores above the water, in market-places, in streets, and beside the palace of Rameses, surged a countless throng. And in spite of that, it was so still, that the rustle of water-reeds and the plaintive howling of hyenas in search of food, were borne to the ear of Horus.

“Wherefore are they gathered together in such numbers?” Horus asked one of the courtiers, as he pointed to the immeasurable rows of human heads.

“They wish to hail thee as the new Pharaoh, lord, and to hear from thy lips of the benefits which thou hast ordained for them.”

In this moment the prince’s heart was smitten

for the first time with the pride of greatness, even as the ocean, coursing forward, smites against a steep shore.

“And what betoken yonder lights?” asked Horus further.

“The priests have entered into the grave of thy mother, Zefora, that they may bear her mortal remains unto the catacombs of the Pharaohs.”

In the heart of Horus was aroused once again grief for his mother, whose remains the grim Rameses had buried amid the slaves because of the mercy she displayed towards the slaves.

“I hear the neighing of horses,” said Horus, as he listened intently. “Who is riding forth at this hour?”

“The chamberlain, lord, has given orders to make ready the envoys unto Jetron, thy preceptor.”

Horus sighed at the recollection of his beloved preceptor, whom Rameses had driven out of the country for having inculcated into the soul of his grandson and successor a loathing for wars, and compassion for the downtrodden people.

“And yonder small light beyond the Nile?”

“By means of yonder small light, O Horus,” replied the courtier, “faithful Berenice greets thee from her cloistered captivity. The high priest has already dispatched the vessel of the Pharaohs for her; and when the sacred ring

gleams upon thy finger, the massive doors of the cloister will open, and, filled with yearning and love, she will return unto thee."

Hearing these words, Horus asked naught else; he became silent and hid his eyes with his hand.

Suddenly he gave a cry of pain.

"What ails thee, O Horus?"

"A bee has stung my foot," replied the prince, growing pale.

By the greenish lustre of the moon, the courtier gazed at his foot.

"Render thanks unto Osiris," he said, "that it is not a spider, whose venom at this hour is wont to be fatal."

O, how vain are human hopes, before the unrelenting decrees. . .

At this moment a captain of the host entered, and bowing down before Horus, he quoth thus :

"The mighty Rameses, waiting until his body shall grow cold, has dispatched me unto thee with the command : Go unto Horus, for my hours in the world are numbered, and fulfil his desire, even as thou hast fulfilled mine. Even though he command thee to surrender Upper Egypt to the Ethiopians and to conclude a brotherly alliance with these foes, accomplish it, when thou beholdest my ring upon his finger; for through the lips of rulers speaketh immortal Osiris."

“ I will not yield Egypt unto the Ethiopians ” spoke the prince, “ But I will conclude peace, for I am grieved by the blood of my people : write forthwith an edict, and hold in readiness the mounted envoys that, as soon as the first fires blaze in my honour, they may speed hence in the direction of the noonday sun, and bear goodwill unto the Ethiopians. And write also a second edict, that from this hour even unto the end of time, no prisoner shall have his tongue torn from his mouth upon the field of battle. Thus have I spoken.”

The captain fell upon his face, and thereupon he withdrew to write the decrees ; the prince, however, urged the courtier to gaze afresh upon his wound, for it sorely distressed him.

“ Thy foot has swelled somewhat, O Horus,” spoke the courtier. “ What would have happened, if instead of a bee, a spider had stung thee ! ”

The imperial chamberlain now entered into the hall, and bowing down before the prince, he said :

“ The mighty Rameses, perceiving that his vision is growing dim, has dispatched me unto thee with the command : Go unto Horus, and fulfil his desire blindly. Even though he command thee to release the captives from their chains and to bestow the whole earth upon the people, do thou it, when thou observest the sacred ring upon his finger, for through the lips of rulers speaketh immortal Osiris.”

“My heart reacheth not so far,” spoke Horus. “But write forthwith an edict, whereby the people’s lease-rents and taxes shall be lowered by a half, and the slaves shall have three days in the week free from labour and they shall not be scourged upon the back with a rod, unless the judge issue a decree to that effect. Write yet one more edict, recalling from banishment my preceptor Jetron, who is the wisest and noblest of the Egyptians. Thus have I spoken.”

The chamberlain fell upon his face, but ere he had time to withdraw for the engrossing of the edicts, the high priest entered.

“O Horus,” he said, “at any moment the mighty Rameses will depart unto the realm of shadows, and Osiris will weigh his heart upon the infallible balance. When, however, the holy ring of the Pharaohs gleams upon thy finger, utter thy commands, and I will obey thee, even though thou shouldst have the miraculous shrine of Ammon destroyed, for through the lips of rulers speaketh immortal Osiris.”

“I will not lay waste,” responded Horus, “but a new shrine will I upraise and the priestly treasury will I enlarge. I crave only, that thou writest an edict concerning the solemn transference of the mortal remains of my mother Zefora unto the catacombs, and a second edict. . . concerning the liberation of Berenice the beloved from her cloistered captivity. Thus have I spoken.”

“Wisely dost thou begin,” replied the high priest. “For the fulfilling of these behests all is even now made ready, and the edicts will I engross forthwith; when thou touchest them with the ring of the Pharaohs, lo, I will enkindle this lamp, that it may proclaim favour unto the people, and to thy Berenice freedom and love.”

The wisest physician from Carnac entered.

“O Horus,” he said, “I marvel not at thy pallor, for Rameses, thy grandsire, is even now breathing his last. He was not able to bear the potency of the medicine, which I was not fain to administer unto him, that monarch of monarchs. With him, therefore, is left only the deputy of the high priest, that, when he dies, the sacred ring may be removed from his finger and bestowed upon thee as a token of unbounded authority. But thou growest ever paler and paler, O Horus,” he added.

“Gaze upon my foot,” moaned Horus, and he fell upon the golden chair, the supports of which were carved in the shape of hawks’ heads.

The physician bent down, gazed at the foot, and drew back horror-stricken.

“O Horus,” he whispered, “an exceedingly venomous spider has stung thee.”

“Am I doomed to death? At such a moment?” asked Horus, with a scarcely audible voice.

And later he added :

“Can that come to pass swiftly? Let me hear the truth. . . .”

“ Ere the moon is hidden behind yonder palm-tree. . . ”

“ Verily? And Rameses will live long yet?”

“ I know not. . . It may be that they are already bearing his ring unto thee.”

At this moment the ministers entered with the edicts made ready.

“ Chamberlain,” cried Horus, clutching at his hand, “ if I should die forthwith, wouldst thou fulfil my commands?”

“ Mayst thou live, O Horus, unto thy grand-sire’s age !” answered the chamberlain. “ But if straightway after him thou wert to stand before the judgment of Osiris, thine every edict should be accomplished, if only thou touch it with the sacred ring of the Pharaohs.”

“ The ring !” repeated Horus, “ But where is it?”

“ One there was among the courtiers,” whispered the captain of the host, “ who told me that mighty Rameses is even now breathing his last.”

“ I have sent unto my deputy,” added the high priest, “ that so soon the heart of Rameses cease to beat, he shall remove the ring.”

“ I thank you,” said Horus. “ I am sorely stricken . . . ah, how sorely. But nevertheless I shall not utterly perish. I shall bequeath blessing, peace, happiness unto the people. and . . . my Berenice will regain freedom. . . Will it be long now?” he asked of the physician.

"Death is a thousand military paces from thee," replied the physician, sadly.

"Hear ye naught? Is there none who comes from thence?" spoke Horus.

Silence.

The moon was drawing nigh unto the palm-tree and was already touching its foremost leaves; the finely crunched sand was softly rustling in the water-clocks.

"Is it afar off?" whispered Horus.

"Eight hundred paces," replied the physician. "I know not, O Horus, whether it will be thine to touch all the edicts with the sacred ring, even though they bear them unto thee straightway."

"Give the edicts unto me," said Horus, hearkening whether any came running from the apartments of Rameses. "And thou, O priest," and he turned to the physician, "give word, how much of life is yet vouchsafed me, that I may be able to confirm at least the most precious of my behests."

"Six hundred paces," whispered the physician.

The edict concerning the lowering of rents for the people and of labour for the slaves, fell from the hands of Horus on to the ground.

"Five hundred. . ."

The edict concerning peace with the Ethiopians slipped from the prince's knees.

"Is there none who comes?"

"Four hundred," replied the physician.

Horus sank into pondering, and . . . the decree concerning the mortal remains of Zefora fell.

"Three hundred . . ."

The same fate befel the edict concerning the recall of Jetron from banishment.

"Two hundred. . ."

The lips of Horus grew livid. With clenched hand he flung to the ground the edict by which the tongues of prisoners taken into captivity were not to be torn out, and there remained only . . . the decree for the liberation of Berenice.

"A hundred. . ."

Amid the deathly stillness could be heard the clatter of sandals. Into the hall the high priest's deputy came running. Horus stretched forth his hand.

"A miracle," cried the newcomer. "Mighty Rameses has regained his health . . . he has risen up alertly from his couch and at sunrise he desires to ride forth for lions. . . Thee, however, O Horus, as a token of favour, he summons to accompany him. . ."

"Dost thou not answer, O Horus?" questioned the envoy of Rameses, marvelling.

"Seest thou not that he has died?" whispered the wisest physician of Carnac.

Behold now, how vain are human hopes before the decrees which the Omnipotent has inscribed with fiery signs upon the heavens.

STANISLAW PRZYBYSZEWSKI : CHOPIN.

THE Polish soul found its deepest utterance in one of the most astonishing artists of all time,—in Frédéric Chopin.

The word is really a relic of the earliest articulate expression of the soul's vitality. The word is, as it were, a well-worn current metaphor, whose original sense we have lost. Who stops to reflect upon the huge spiritual sound-value of the word "mother," of all the long-drawn-out combinations of sound and melody, from which a purely verbal unit has arisen, which possibly admits of wide gradations of feeling, but has lost its original sound-value? I imagine that, originally, words were sung and thus in sound and melody could reproduce their whole emotional contents. With the loss of its sound value, the word has by no means lost its emotional value, but this has become deposited, has, so to speak, separated itself from the word, and has created in music its own form of being, independent from the word.

And thus it comes about, that the innermost spiritual development of a nation can be investi-

gated only in its music. And every nation possesses a specific tone, to which its whole spirit is attuned. This tone is quite different in the soul of the Germanic or Latin peoples, and a quite peculiar one, entirely different from every other, among the Slavonic peoples.

To grasp the specific value of this mysterious tone in its whole range, to possess the power of harmonically attuning all other tones to this basic dominant,—herein lies the power of every artist and, at the same time, is afforded the standard as to how far an artist belongs to his own race or not.

This tone is the rudimentary and the earliest unity in the spiritual shaping of each nation. It is a kind of nucleus around which all the other ingredients of that nation are deposited, around which they oscillate and harden to an organic body. This fundamental tone affects all feelings, all impressions, and all development with a pitch peculiar to itself, and with its vivifying sap it saturates and strengthens all spiritual processes.

And hence it comes about that the soul of every nation is mirrored at its purest and at its strongest in music, and it is far easier to grasp the peculiar spiritual qualities of a nation in its music than in the word.

And the tone, to which the spirit of the Pole is attuned, is not a casual phenomenon,—it is the music of his blood, it is his breath, it is the

quality of his eye, which is focussed for the distant sky-line of broad, lonely plains, it is the organic peculiarity of his larynx which fashioned for itself sounds unknown to the languages of other nations, it is the sighing and moaning of his earth and the music made by the courses of his streams and the rhythm to which the waves upon his lakes are stirred, and the monotone psalmody of autumn rain when with dismal insistence it beats against oozing windows.

And this fundamental tone of the Polish soul, such as is revealed at its purest in Polish folk-music, but which has at its disposal only a scanty gamut of a few notes, thrived in Chopin's soul to a gigantic blossom of unspeakable beauty and loftiest majesty.

The foreign sound of his name appears to be only a matter of chance, an unpleasant misunderstanding, for it is precisely in Chopin that the Polish folk-spirit celebrates its holiest Ascension Day. Chopin's soul is inseparably united with the soul of the entire Polish race by a sacrament of indissoluble vows. With Mickiewicz he could declare as a seer that the soul of the entire race was embodied in his, that he and the race were an inseparable unity, and in sooth, Poland* could not have found a sublimer bridegroom than Chopin.

*Polska, the word in the original, is feminine.

And before Chopin we stand faced by an astounding riddle. Catholic hagiography asserts that Providence selects certain individuals whom it burdens with a surfeit of the most fearful torments, in order that they may do penance for the sins committed by all mankind, the measure of whose sins they thus cancel by their own martyrdom. These individuals are the martyrs chosen by God, and through their torments his unfathomable plans and judgments are accomplished. And all their griefs, all their torments are of no account in view of the expiation that is achieved.

Something analogous was accomplished in Chopin's soul; his whole external life is of no account in comparison with the holy mission which he was to fulfil: To reveal to the entire world the genius of a whole nation in all its exalted power which was incarnate within him. And if we think of Chopin we may fittingly forget that he existed as a separate entity. But on the other hand we must bow down low before the holy revelation of the Polish soul, whose symbolic revelation was accomplished in Chopin.

Chopin, I repeat, was the envoy whom the soul of the nation had anointed and sent forth in order that he might announce its glory and its power. And thus it is to be understood that Chopin can be regarded as the classical example of a mighty artist, who, overlaid with riches,

needed to do nothing else but with lavish hands to scatter teeming treasures about him,—treasures which the soul of the nation had hoarded in his soul for centuries.

And Chopin died neither too early nor too late; in this brief individual life the entire folk-soul was enabled to give itself complete utterance in richer measure than almost any other. Indeed, there is hardly another artist, the events of whose life are of so little interest as in the case of Chopin. He is revelation and symbol. And the centre of equilibrium around which every happening in his soul oscillates, that is the land which bore him, the land with its sadness and its quiet melancholy rapture, its sombre tragicness and its blood-red destiny, the land, an isle yearned for with the greater anguish, as it slipped away in ever remoter perspectives and began to vanish from the gaze, the promised land upon which all yearning and striving centred, and which might never again be viewed with one's own eyes—the land, not as an ordinary reality, but rather as a Platonic anamnesis; in a distant memory which was coloured with a deeper flush, the greater the longing for it which set the heart of the gazer aquiver.

Ever again, throughout his immortal work, is the flaming vision of that land, which in the words of the poet Ujejski, “by day attires itself in kingly splendour and in the night oozes with

blood," of that land, of which Pope Paul V. said, when a Polish delegation asked him for relics of saints: "Take a morsel of your earth—that in itself is a relic, for it is soaked with the blood of the holiest martyrs!"

And how fervently must Chopin have loved that land, when he always carried at his breast a fragment of it, carefully sewn up in a small wallet.

Before our eyes the broad-boughed willows ascend from the patches of autumn mist by those waysides, where crouch misery and sadness, affliction and sorest distress, and the memory of griefs for which the source of tears has dried, and heavy languishing . . . all this for sunken splendour, for unavailing sacrifices, for battles which were not fought out . . .

And in the sallow moonlight the cross-roads are ghastly with the wide-opened arms of crosses, the swamps are haunted by the flickering souls of the damned, around stretch the bare fields of stubble, and in the slender poplars which form the framework of some isolated grave, the wind sings the dismal ballad of the mistress who slew the master; from the bottom of an abysmal lake the sprites arise and sing treacherous and alluring melodies, and, enticed by the flickering will-o'-the-wisp, man ventures on to broad fen-lands, upon which he shall find his mournful grave.

Love for this land throve in Chopin's soul, till it became his most exalted creed, and thus it is, that a foreign nation cannot understand him, even in the remotest, as the Pole does—to the subtlest, the most fervent vibrations in Chopin's soul, the foreigner is deaf, precisely where the strongest echo is engendered in the Polish spirit.

In the specific tone of the Polish soul, of which I spoke at the beginning, and which the folk-song has preserved in all its maiden purity, in the dance-tunes of the Polish people, in their hymns, that infinitely melancholy sing-song in an undertone, that grievous psalmody of yearning—therein lies deeply buried the root of Chopin's creative power.

And Chopin took from the hand of the Polish peasant the fiddle carved from the bark of the lime-tree—but this instrument proved too scant; how could it encompass all those things in the soul of the people with which the organ-music of the village churches has become inseparably united, and the sobbing of the flute which was carved from the spring-tide branches of the willow, the groaning of the cellos, and the whining of the bag-pipes?

In his soul Chopin collected all those things which the people have wept about, have sung of in the deep grief of despair, have bewailed, and for which the g, d, a, e of the violin cannot

suffice. So he fashioned for himself an instrument which, in reality, has no name.

For Chopin's piano is something quite different from that of a Bach, a Mozart or a Beethoven. His piano is really not a tool prepared for the transmission of sounds; it is the profound, the impalpable, the spontaneous projection, astonishing in its infinite range, of Chopin's soul, of that mysterious synthesis in sound of the whole nation's most actual entity. In *his* piano Chopin was able to give this entire soul palpable shape, to span its subtlest fibres as strings, and to bestow upon them such power and scope of utterance that they could replace a whole orchestra and in their compass express the most secret emotions of the soul which the brain itself cannot grasp.

Chopin did not need to create orchestral works—his piano is an orchestra in itself; is violin and cello together, is organ and flute and bagpipes, a hunting-horn and the trumpet of the insurgent.

And then, upon this instrument so peculiarly his own, which he himself had fashioned, he created in sounds the great secret of his nation's soul, and thus he became its profoundest interpreter and its clairvoyant herald.

But he did not forget what he owed to the original, naive folk-tunes; for the deepest impressions of his own soul he clad in the form

of the Mazurek,* and within the compass of these few primordial notes the mighty artist aroused the Polish soul from its very depths to a potent and sorrowful vitality. The frame within which I am dealing with the most significant revelations of the Polish spirit, does not permit me to enter upon a thorough analysis of Chopin's production. I will draw attention only to those works in which the Chopin-race, the Chopin-land attain their clearest utterance. And among these, one of the most significant seems to me, Mazurek Op. 41, No. 1.

Maestoso.

A calm, twilight state of dream, now and then stirred by an upheaval of the soul—pining melancholy of endless plains, straying of weary fingers on the great celestial harp of joy-sated woe, and suddenly, like a gust of wind, of which none can say whence it comes, an abrupt cry, half a triumphal shout, half a moaning gasp, which stifles the deep sorrow concealed somewhere beneath.

Dance, my soul, dance!

And God knows whence came this wild joy, this craving for mighty gratification reaching from one end of the earth to the other; of themselves the feet stamp to the rhythm of a crazed dance,

*Mazurek is something quite different from Mazurka. Chopin's Mazurek is not to be confused with the dance-tune of the Mazurka.

wild sounds burst louder and louder from the throat, the dance-tune rages in eddying leaps, in a rumbling bass—but this morbid wish to daze the senses is in vain, cowering grief creeps forth guilefully, slowly in an indistinct, dusk-shrouded memory.

And at once, at the same time, the hands are folded in devout contrition, a prayer arises, a fervid cry for grace and forgiveness—the turmoil is still astir, but already it is dying away as the wearied head despairingly sways to and fro, while the arms droop powerlessly and the soul is sunk in dull brooding. And only a grievous sob, only a vague, dream-caught louring . . . a fading rustle of the wind in the bare fields of stubble.

And again that crazed dance!

In defiance and scorn of God and the devil!

The breast heaves, that it seems about to burst, the throat grows hoarse, the soul stiffens in wild passion—but now it is the last great shout that must be dragged forth. And then the great moment of release. Not one shout, but a whole cascade of shouts are released foaming into the depths in mighty octaves—they pour down, wane, trickle away, perish in humble, abject self-surrender to the abysmal powers, disclosing the most secret depths of the Polish soul.

A single, penitent, breast-beating “Thy will be done, O Lord!”

Yea and amen !

Into sleep, the deep sleep of calmness and release.

And with this evening hymn of the soul, which is scourged to death by vital anguish and vital torment, ends not only this mazurek ; we find it again everywhere—in the impromptus, the preludes, and, wonderfully beautiful in the mazurek in F flat minor.

It is in the mazurek that Chopin has reproduced not only the tone of his nation, but, at the same time, the tone of his own soul. He himself designated this primordial tone by the untranslatable word “Zal” ;* a feeling of grief and melancholy, united with the past memory of things on which the heart dotes and which are no more ; an unappeasable, perpetual yearning which gnaws at the soul, a perpetual enforced memory of something unattainable, a hopeless dreaming of a distant home which shall never again be seen, of people, who never again will be met, a brooding over sunken splendour, over vanished beauty of happiness and joy which gladdened life in bygone days.

It is as though Chopin had dispatched his astral body from abroad into his own country, and now hearkened intently in sorrowful yearning for the secret tidings from afar.

*Z is pronounced like a French j.

A sorrowfully intent listening for something close and yet so endlessly distant, a brooding recollection of memories which escape and blurr, a gnawing pang of desire to experience them all once again in the glowing fullness of life, and the awareness of disconsolate impotence in the face of the impossible—all this and perhaps much else may well be what the specific tone of Chopin's soul, the sublimest revelation of the entire folk-soul, this "Żal" expresses.

And indeed, it could not be otherwise.

For this tone, which predominates so paramountly in the whole of Chopin's music, is not the tone of a nation who in revelry spend days of resplendent glory, sated with triumphs and proud of their empire, extending from one ocean to the other, nor is it that same nation's tone of drunken delirium, when in gluttony and a raving need for intoxication they steeped their senses in drunkenness and brought upon themselves the disgrace of Targowica*—no! It is that heroic overwhelming tone of martyrdom, which upon the deadly field of Maciejowice† sobbed for mercy in crazed prayers, the tone of despair, whose death-rattle resounds amid throes of torment, filled with the breath of revolt and curses and revilings and shrill outcry to God: "O thou,

*Confederation of Targowica, at which the last Polish King agreed to the first partition of Poland.

†At the end of the first Polish revolt.

who through so many centuries hast arrayed Poland in splendour and glory!''*—the despairing outcry to which God remained deaf—a screech of the nation which breathed its last in deadly combat upon the ramparts of Praga† . . .

And so it came about that all revelations of Chopin's soul are clad in this sore "Żal," beset by the din aroused by shouts of damnation, by blasphemy and by that venturesome defiance which does not shrink from calling God Himself into the lists—and, if there is still the flash of a smile anywhere, it is that tortured smile of the Spartan youth who stole the fox. The fox is wrenching wounds in his naked flesh, but he durst not betray his pain : he laughs on—and of such woeful, serene and tortured laughter only Chopin was capable.

But amid this eternal wrath, in this sombre night of despair, in this unbounded yearning and incessant grappling with grief and torment, the breath at length failed. A hellish spectre afflicted the breast . . . "Release! Release!" cried the wounded heart.

And then Chopin's wounded soul conjured up

*First line of the Polish National Hymn.

†A suburb of Warsaw, where in 1831 the Russians perpetrated a massacre of the most inhuman description. More than 12,000 people—men, women and children—were slaughtered without mercy.

the flaming vision of Poland, of a Poland which had broken its coffin, has arisen from the tomb and now arises in the purple pomp of triumph, in the ermine of a majestic potency; Poland, the bulwark of Christendom; Poland, the holy refuge of every freedom, the Poland of primates, magnates, senators, mighty dukes and of the choicest chivalry in the whole world.

And from their battle-graves have arisen those who fell at Grunwald in bitterest contest with the Knights of the Cross, and those who in a holy death-ride against the Turks rallied round Ladislaw Warnenczyk, that heroic scion of the Jagellons, and those whose bones rotted upon the Kahlenberg at the relief of Vienna . . . the kings broke the seal of sarcophagus, the cardinals, the magnates, and the rulers arose from their vaults and grouped themselves in a huge procession, and at their head in triumphant majesty, the king of kings, the "King-Spirit,"* which had embodied itself in the Polish people.

And before our eyes is set astir like an unfettered storm-blast, like a shattering hurricane, the proud lion-brood of steel-armoured heroes, that chosen band of Polish hussars with silver wings drooping low from their arms,—but grievously blares forth the battle-trumpet which calls them to the heroic dance of death, and at the

*One of Slowacki's sublimest poetical works.

heart clutches a misgiving that all this is a dream within a dream, all long since forgotten splendour—but only now and then, for above everything that omnipotent vision still prevails : that solemn, majestic, triumphal march of such lordly greatness and proud gravity, of such sublimity, that there is nothing with which it can be compared.

The polonaise in A flat major is an overwhelming and truly exalted “Danse macabre” of that nation which, ever afresh, was condemned to death, and ever afresh broke the coffin-lid—and this, its magnificent clinging to life, its uniquely stubborn affirmation of life, has nowhere been revealed in Polish art so potently, so grimly, and so majestically as in this heroic dance.

Schumann wrote of Chopin’s mazureks, that if the ruler of the north knew what foes he had in these modest melodies, he would infallibly forbid this music;—what, then, shall be said of this polonaise in A flat major, which signifies a thunderous, stubborn, unyielding manifesto of those who will not allow themselves to be buried alive?

And there came that time when the soul of the mighty seer surged up amid the martyrdom of his nation to the power of one who could compare himself with God and with frenzied hands beats upon the portals of destiny with the despairing

cry : " Wherefore? Wherefore? Eli, eli, lama sabachthani? Wherefore hast thou forsaken me, O Lord?"

And such a thrilling " Eli, eli, lama sabachthani?" is the most potent expression which nation ever had found for its despairing grief :

Chopin's polonaise in F sharp minor.

With what could it be compared?

In the whole of Polish art, surpassingly rich as it is, I am unable to find any adequate equivalent. In power of clairvoyant impulse, inspiration now forcibly detached from all that is sensual, it is certainly on the same level as the " Improvisation " of Mickiewicz, but it rises above what is egotistic in this poem, and in artistic strength it surpasses by far the national work of the Polish painter Grottger. . . But perhaps something akin to it might be perceived in Matejko's picture, " Rejtan."*

Rejtan, flung down by frenzied torment, stretched headlong upon the threshold of the assembly-hall, is lying on his back; with his sharp nails he is dragging his shirt from his breast, and is clamouring for his heart to be torn out, that he may not survive the disgrace of Poland's partition. . .

The same strength of grief, the same over-

*This picture represents the one man who protested against the first partition of Poland.

whelming exertion of all spiritual power as in Rejtan's protest upon the picture by Matejko, pulsates towards us in the dreadful "Wherefore?" of Chopin's polonaise in F sharp minor.

And once again, more mightily, more menacingly, the same question. As if prepared for a murderous leap, the panting Wherefore crouches—till at last it is let loose in a hurricane of shrieks, in a blood-red, seething question: "Wherefore hast thou deserted us, O Lord?"

Silence.

There is no answer.

Man has recourse to his own self. And from his soul issues an omnipotent, solemn chant; it resounds with an amplitude of strength endowed by the sure knowledge that it is a match for its destiny; it strides onwards with the conscious surety that it can now solve any secret whatsoever and gazes boldly and unterrified into the spectral eyes of the sphinx. But not for long,—already man shudders, dread and anguish are arising within him; he had desired to tear all seals asunder, and they lie untouched before him.

Life has not ceased to be a riddle, nor has death lost its sting, and again man sighs amid moans of torment: "Wherefore?"

And his breast is rended by an uncanny sobbing, the despairing death-rattle of the dying, who no longer mourn for life, but curse destiny because they cannot fight on. And by a super-

human effort of will they drag themselves from the ground afresh, and afresh they make an onslaught upon the gates of the lost paradise; but it endures not for long; with a gruesome shriek of pain this desperate fit of wrath ebbs away.

And from afar there comes a sound like the confused din of battle,—muffled roaring of cannon, the clatter of fire-arms, the rumble of the earth beneath the hoofs of raging horses,—prayers for the dying can be heard, beseeching pleas to the guider of battles, the chaos and the anguish and the wrath of the fight move farther and farther away; then suddenly, from the savage brawling of battle, the crazed raging of the fight, the perishing prayers, the mad pleas of dying heroes for release by death, like a holy, mystic rose, there blossoms a mysterious mazurek, in which the genius of Chopin has revealed the whole sorely profound death-poetry of his nation with incredible creative strength.

From all the tender, naive and yet so infinitely subtle songs of the Polish lancers, the disconsolate folk-songs after the collapse of the revolution of 1831, from all the scantily-tuned but all the more richly laden chants of many a long since forgotten Tyrtæus, who with the primordial tone of the Polish soul, the mazurek,*

*The most popular national song, "Poland is not yet lost," is a mazurek.

urged on the nation to battle, Chopin created in this one mazurek of the polonaise in F sharp minor, incomparable in the power of its invention, an immortal, a heaven-storming song of songs.

But all this is but a dream—all the more terrible the awakening. Afresh begins the sombre “*Missa desperationis*” which, in a “*Ite, missa est*” degenerates into a raging orgasm of despair. The end of these epic events, the most grievous that ever heroic race passed through in superhuman distress, is only the dying sigh of a sorrow which has already passed beyond the bounds of sorrowful emotion,—a sorrow beyond any human conception of torment.

And it seemed that all had now sunk to rest, all had now died away, that the last coffin was now borne out from the dead-house. . . . And then suddenly a fearful, piercing shriek, like the dire thunder of the Last Judgment. This final F, beneath which Chopin’s trembling hand in its visionary rapture of creation had written a four-fold forte, is one of the strangest riddles in his work.

This abrupt and horrible shriek, which sets the hair on end,—is it the last outcry of a breaking heart, or a convulsive summons to a fresh contest?

It might appear that Chopin’s soul had, in the polonaise in F sharp minor, contrived to utter

its profoundest grief, that this polonaise expresses the extreme pitch of despairing struggle on the part of a nation begirt with bonds and fetters. But no! This polonaise seems only a prelude to the sonata in B flat minor, that Niagara of omnipotent suffering, which from heaven-projected heights dashes into the depths, and with a flaming geyser of despair lashes the very vault of heaven to pieces.

The rhythm of the first part is the raging pace of a stallion of hell bespattered with bloody froth, tearing across graves and fields of corpses, and upon its back carrying a mad horseman, an ill-starred herald of defeat and collapse. A vision of apocalyptic riders, of fire, of pestilence, of famine, of murderous orgies and open graves. . . .

The rhythm of this part represents the mood of the terror-stricken nation who, upon the ramparts where it has wandered to rejoice at the certain victory below in the plain, now in the face of defeat, surges back in a panic to the city, throngs the streets to overflowing, is crushed to death in the open squares, bursts the walls of churches, ends with a crazed stammering of despairing prayers, in the sobbing and groaning of helpless torment.

Only now and then a lurking stillness, as if invisible hands were uplifting the holy mon-

strance above the whole nation and the whole globe, but only for an instant,—once more a pall of deadly anguish heaves across the whole sky, the air thrills with shrieks of the slain and the murdered, and above the city pillars of fire blaze high up in a tornado, burst in the middle, writhe along the ground, and with greedy tongues of flame lick up pools of blood.

But yet one more, yet the last hope has clutched the nation's heart :

Like a blast of wind the noblest troop of heroes rages across the field of the dead, that sparks are set aflash beneath the hoofs, that the earth quivers, and the whole atmosphere re-echoes with a wild trumpet-blare of victory, but a prophetic chant of ill-omen forebodes no victory. Through the sorrowful psalmody of the scherzo the approaching trample of horses can be heard afar off,—and somewhere afar off a final, a bloody contest is panting, an indistinct echo from the heroic troop's dance of death resounds softly across,—the troop which had wedged itself into the superior numbers of the enemy and at the cross-roads of the nation, which has wandered from the track, which has fallen a prey to destruction, which is doomed to ruin, its soul sobs and laments.

And now the boom of heavy bells, but not those which in Beethoven, with impressive, majestic solemnity, hail the victorious hero

upon the threshold of an immortal Walhalla, but those despairing, those uncalmable in their grief, those dull and anguished, when mourners cast a handful of earth upon the coffin, and from the spades of the grave-diggers the black, blood-soaked earth sinks into the dark pit.

The kingdom of earth has been entwined with heaven by invisible strings, invisible hands are straying mournfully upon this celestial harp, and they weep and lament with the woeful moaning of those daughters of Jerusalem, to whom the Redeemer exclaimed in supremest scorn of death. "Weep not for me, but for you and your children"—and yet they weep and lament, despondently, not divining that the tomb will open and from the dark vault, the spirit of the nation in new splendour and victorious magnificence, will soar aloft to a new life.

For the grave could not be filled in,—endlessly, endlessly, masses of earth, soaked by holy blood of martyrs, rolled upon the coffin, and yet the grave remained open,—the lid of the coffin trembles, quivers, opens, burst by the giant breast, which is still alive and teeming with strength,—and the bells boom and boom, flung to and fro by the tempest of vengeance, of requital, of a distant hope fervid with victory.

The contest which has long since ebbed away upon earth, is continued somewhere in super-earthly spaces in a savage hurricane, which may

well have once heralded the entire creation, and the chaos of the finale which really signifies a prelude, seems to give birth to new stars.

Above the frowning abyss of despair, above the dark streams of tears and blood, above the broad-boughed willows, which weep by the graves of heroes and enclose an immeasurable graveyard, the king-spirit of the nation whose gaze is fixed rigidly upon its resurrection, gloomily broods in proud and sombre power.

Every paraphrase whatsoever of Chopin's work would, I clearly realise, be meaningless, if it were a question of emphasising its beauty and greatness,—my only object, when I ventured to transpose Chopin's tone into words, was to extract therefrom the true primordial tone of the Polish soul which has become embodied in Chopin's music. . . .

In Chopin's music the foreigner will gain the clearest insight into the most significant factor of Polish culture.

The astonishing synthesis of the subtlest culture of the West with the infinitely profound emotional culture of the Slav. Synthesis of the eminent spiritual culture, which centuries had built up, with the sublime culture of the heart, which to this degree is peculiar only to the Slav; a culture of the heart, which is so saturated with profoundest, darkest emotional excess, that it is sometimes lost in the dusk of mystical ascensions,

venturing so far out in the super-earthly distances of Messianic yearning, that its actual value as culture is almost lost sight of, and it becomes a veritable religion.

W. S. REYMONT: IN THE OLD TOWN AT LODZ.

Lower down, behind the New Market Square, it teemed with Jews and workmen hurrying towards the Old Town. At this spot, the Piotrkow Street changed its aspect and character for the third time, for from Gajer Market to Nawrot it is a street of factories, from Nawrot to the New Market Square a business thoroughfare, and from thence downwards into the Old Town, it is taken up by Jewish second-hand dealers.

Here the mud was blacker and slimier, there was a different kind of pavement in front of each house, sometimes it consisted of broad stonework, then a narrow, worn-out strip of concrete, or it became merely a series of tiny, mudstained cobbles which were a torment to the foot. The gutters flowed with liquid refuse from the factories, and this extended in the form of dirty-yellow, red and sky-blue ribbons; from some

houses and the factories, which lay behind them, the overflow was so copious that, unable to find room in the shallow gutters, it rose above the kerb and flooded the pavements with coloured waves, even up to the worn thresholds of numerous little shops, from whose black, miry interiors was wafted dirt and decay, the smell of herrings, of rotting vegetables or of alcohol.

The houses which were old, tumble-down, dingy, with the plaster crumbling in gaps like wounds, with bare brickwork, here and there of wood or with common panelling, cracking and slipping away by the doors and windows, at the crooked edges of the window-sashes, twisted, jaded, dirty, stood like a ghastly row of corpse-houses, amongst which new ones were thrusting themselves,—three-storied giants with countless windows, not yet whitewashed, without balconies, with makeshift windows, and already full of human antheaps, and the throb of the spinning looms, which worked regardless of Sunday, the rattle of noisy machines, weaving shoddy for export, and the piercing creak of spindles by which the yarn was wound on to bobbins for the use of the hand-loom.

In front of these endless houses, which rose up with their red and frowning walls above the ocean of perishing ruins and bustle of hucksters, lay whole stacks of bricks and wood, blocking up the already narrow street, which swarmed with

carts, horses, with goods in transport, with uproar, with the cries of dealers and the thousand-fold voices of workmen, who were pouring along in multitudes to the Old Town; they walked in the middle of the road or by the side of the pavement; their many-coloured shawls which they had twisted about their necks, lent a touch of brightness to the general grey-grimy tint of the street.

The Old Town and all the little streets round about, quivered with the usual Sunday bustle.

On the rectangular space, flanked by old, one-storeyed houses which had never been renovated, and full of shops, taverns and so-called Bierhallen, littered with hundreds of hideous booths and stalls, there thronged several thousand people, hundreds of carts and horses—the whole a mingled shouting, talking, cursing, pushing.

This shrieking chaos was surging from one side of the square to the other. Above this tangle of heads, dishevelled hair, upraised arms, horses' heads, butchers' axes flashing swiftly in the sunshine, as they were lifted above the hacked joints of meat, huge loaves of bread, which the jostle of the crowd had raised above the heads, yellow, green, red, violet scarves fluttering like banners from the clothing-stalls; caps and hats hanging on poles, boots, woollen shawls, which, like coloured snakes fluttered in the wind and beat against the faces of the crowd; tin vessels

glittering in the sunshine ; piles of bacon, stacks of oranges, arranged on trestles, balloons, shining gaudily against the dark background of the mob, and a plaster of mud, half-dissolved, trampled upon, stirred up, was splashed from underfoot on to the booths and the peoples' faces and oozed from the square into the gutters and on to the streets which surrounded the market on four sides, through which huge brewers' drays filled with barrels, were slowly passing, carts with meat, covered up with dirty rags, or shining from afar with reddish-yellow ribs of beef, wrenched away from the hides ; carts laden with sacks of flour, carts full of fowls that were uttering shrill cries, the quacking of ducks and the cackling of geese, which thrust out their white heads through the bars of their coops and hissed at the passers-by.

From time to time, at the side of these endless rows of carts, passing one after the other, some elegant carriage would hastily slip through, bespattering with mud the people, the carts, the pavements, upon which squatted old, worn-out Jewesses with baskets full of cooked peas, sweet-meats, preserved apples and children's play-things.

In front of shops which were open and filled with people, stood tables, chairs, benches, upon which lay whole loads of fancy goods, stockings, socks, artificial flowers, cambric as stiff as sheets

of tin, gaudy counterpanes, cotton lace. At one end of the Market Square stood yellow-tinted bedsteads, wardrobes, which would not shut and imitation mahogany with a bronze stain. Mirrors in which nothing could be seen, glittered in the sun; cradles, piles of kitchen utensils, behind which, on the ground, upon a few wisps of straw, sat peasant women with butter and milk, dressed in red woollen frocks and aprons. And amid the carts and trestles there were women who pushed their way through with baskets of starched cotton mob-caps, which were being tried on right in the middle of the street.

In Poprzeczna Street, close by the Market Square, stood tables with hats, on which wretched flowers, rusty clasps, and gaudy, dyed feathers, waved sadly to and fro against a background of house walls.

Men's outfits were being bought, sold and tried on in the street, in passages, even against a wall, behind a screen that generally screened nothing.

The work-women were also trying on dresses, aprons and petticoats.

The uproar increased continually, for from the upper part of the town the buyers were pouring in streams, and fresh cries arose, invitations were bawled from hoarse throats, the noise of children's trumpets tooted from all sides, the clatter of carts, the squeaking of sucking-pigs, the screeching of geese, all the crazy uproar of a

human assembly simmered and beat against that pure, sunlit heaven, which hung above the city like a pale, clear-green canopy.

In one of the taverns there was playing and dancing, so that from time to time, through the unholy din and uproar, there penetrated the sound of harmonium and fiddles performing a rustic dance, and the loud, heated outcries of the dancers, but these sounds were soon lost amid the chaos of a brawl which had broken out in the middle of the market square, by the smoked-meat stalls.

Some dozen or so bodies, writhing and grappling together, scuffled amid yells, and staggered off in all directions, until in the end they tumbled under the stalls into the mud, wallowing and fighting tooth and nail like a huge tangle, swarming with arms, legs, blood-stained faces, projecting tongues, whites of eyes bulging with madness.—“The Promised Land,” Vol. I. Ch. 6.

CZECH :

J. S. MACHAR : SONIA (FROM "THE CONFESSIONS OF AN AUTHOR.")

I read Dostoyevsky's "Crime and Punishment" . . .

I read the story of the student Raskolnikov in my uninviting room, shivering with cold and writhing with hunger ; my spirit was haunted by that feeling of grief and emptiness common to every Czech in the nineties ; the conflict of life, such as I had been compelled to live it under the insane yoke of the secondary school and then hunting after niggardly coaching jobs with vain yearnings for freedom and sunshine within, burdened and afflicted me unspeakably ; I was sated with the world which I did not know, nauseated by life of which I had no experience, having no strength because there was no hope, and there was no hope, because there was nowhere for it to seize hold. My spirit weighed upon me like a fallow field full of weeds, a few of which—my verses—swayed to and fro there sadly and despondently, waiting submissively for

the stroke of the scythe, the foreboding of an early death persisted in me with extraordinary strength, because death seemed to me the natural and only result of my condition.

And into this spirit there now fell sentences and scenes the like of which I had met with neither in life nor in literature. I read each page three or four times in succession; I did not hurry, I was not anxious to know what the end of the story would be; my spirit was in a ferment, everything within it rose upwards, my nerves were strained like wires and quivered with anguish—my own suffering was doubled by the suffering of another, and evinced itself as sheer physical pain.

And meantime I used to go to school and felt the whole inanity of so-called studies, Xenophon, Caesar, dogmatics, mathematics; I used to go to my coaching jobs, and the more they afflicted me, the more I afflicted others, insisting to them how important it is to know the irregular perfects and the ablative absolute—I did everything like a machine, but with a spirit in painful turmoil. Then evening came, and jaded and hungry I would sit down to Raskolnikov.

“A human louse”—yes, that is what Raskolnikov called the murdered usurers . . . but her stupid sister was also a human louse, a superfluous louse, the scamp Svidrigailov was a louse, the drunkard Marmeladov was a louse, the

magistrate Porphyry was also a louse, and, finally, so was Raskolnikov himself. And Sonia, the poor skinny harlot, who would give herself to every such louse in the street,—does she stand above them? And amongst all this murdering, loving, condemning, drinking, and merry-making,—how unnaturally the virtuous Avdotya Romanovna is drawn! And you, reader, are sickened by men and the world, but, my dear fellow, look closely at yourself . . . not only your clergyman, your teacher so and so, the person so and so, with whom you are acquainted, whom you despise, whom you loathe,—you yourself are just such a human louse, a superfluous creature of chance. You turn up your nose at the world,—but what do you demand of it? You are sickened by life,—who keeps you there? A stone falls into the water and nobody notices it, and the stream does not stand still. You are puffed up, vain, my reader,—quote a few of your ephemeral verses that have appeared in print,—those images, those rhymes, those banalities,—you cannot? Ah yes, immortal art is something quite different, something vastly remote from you . . . you read, for instance, “Crime and Punishment,” and you will writhe like a worm. . . . Humble yourself, proud human louse, the meanest crossing-sweeper is worth as much as you, and perhaps more : he is well aware of his paltriness and has no wish to thrust his head among the stars. Scourge you”

self, scourge, you see how much easier I feel at once.

Ye gods, how I scourged myself . . . the sufferings I went through over that dreadful book! I finished reading it,—and suddenly all was still. Into my spirit there mounted a kind of frosty calm, the surging grew numb and as if the book had prompted me with a single ghastly idea, which seemed to me axiomatic, I felt that I must murder a human being. And I knew that I must kill them with an axe like Raskolnikov, and I found the axe in Mrs. Randa's kitchen and it was sharp, having been recently whetted by Mr. Randa. And I felt, further, that my victim must be some old woman or other, and her features would resemble those of the old usurers in the novel. . . I found her. One afternoon I was going across the Staroměstské Náměstí. In a covered way by St. Tein's Church there was a shop where plates, pots, and dishes were sold. I caught sight of the proprietress, an ugly old woman. A human louse, thus Fate wills it. . . I walked round a few times, watching the shop. Nobody went in there, the old woman was sitting in her recess, with her knees drawn up,—clearly she was warming her feet at the glowing coals. I seemed to be dreaming. I was satisfied, I went home, sat down and considered the matter in cold blood. It now occurred to me that I must know whether there was a bell on the door of the

shop. I went back. I entered the shop, a bell tinkled above my head. The old woman looked at me, and it seemed to me that she guessed what I had in mind. Her glance struck me as sharp and inquisitive. I asked for a tea-cup, was a long time choosing, and kept on looking at the old woman. Yes, she's the one, I said to myself. I bought a cup at last, went out, but stood still in front of the shop. The old woman was watching me . . . after a while she opened the door, stood on the threshold, looked about as if at random and then fixed me with a long stare. I went away as if disgraced. It struck me that this woman fancied I was a thief, a common pilfering thief. My prompting received its first blow ; then on the next day the golden March sun, a hamper from my mother with washing, a loaf of bread and a page of her dear, honest Gothic script, dealt it the final one. I was cured of my fancies, but the book left a strong impression. I was humbled, reduced, and taken down to where other mortals were living. I began to judge them, not according to their faults and failings, but according to my own. Feeling myself as a component part of the whole, I judged from the part to the whole.

You have given Dostoyevsky credit for having preserved me from murder by his "Crime and Punishment." No, gentlemen, a hundred times

no. Dostoyevsky is not a parochial schoolmaster of that sort. I got to know him otherwise. . .

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I did not seek Sonia, but I found her. . . Sonia's name was Marie, but in that house she had been patriotically re-christened Vlasta, and she was sixteen or seventeen years old. She was delicately made and fair-haired, and her colouring was so pronouncedly vivid, that she seemed to have been moulded in sugar and tinted by an adept at painting, who knew naught of shades and nuances, but had put a full red on the face, an honest summer azure upon the eyes, cinnabar upon the lips and the ideal whiteness of the human body upon the brow and temples. Her hair was dyed yellow—the lurid yellowness of straw; later, when she stopped colouring it, I saw that it was chestnut. . .

We sat facing each other; I looked at her and felt sorry for her. It was half because of promptings from Raskolnikov, half really because of the circumstances under which I was vegetating. We seized each other's hands and she made her confession. At an early age she had lost her mother. Her father was a teacher, and through his grief at her mother's death he had begun to drink and play cards. Then they had driven him from his post. She had been seduced by some student or other on a summer night in the

holidays. She had reached Prague and the house where she then was. Sometimes her father visited her, took every farthing from her, and went away. Of her present life, of the value of life in general, of her future, I spoke enthusiastically and with conviction. And so we sat, two lost creatures, in a silent deserted room of an ill-famed house till a late hour in the morning. And we parted with a shy kiss and the promise to see each other again on the afternoon of the next day.

She came down at five o'clock the next day and we went through crooked streets across the Franz Josef Bridge as far as Stromovka to a lonely path along the Moldau. We continued our conversation of the day before. We described our childhood to each other, and discovered many points in common there. We spoke of our likings and longings, and in many things we were in agreement. And we admitted that we were as close to each other as if we had known each other for years. When night came on, I accompanied her home. On the way back she was sad, unusually sad at the thought of what awaited her at home. . . At the street door she begged me to wait a little, as she would return at once. She came, took me by the hand, asked me to walk quietly and led me upstairs to her room. Amid pure kisses and tears we sat together for a long, long time. . . She wept for her own sake and I

for her, too, because I felt that she was fond of me and I of her. We made plans for the future, but we saw no escape from the present, for duty bound her to that house and to that life. . .

About three o'clock in the morning, somebody knocked on the match-wood wall of the room and whispered : "Are you asleep, Vlasta?" It was her friend. Vlasta opened the door and let her in. Valerie, a stout girl, introduced herself to me ceremoniously, gave me her hand, and sat down wearily upon the bed. . . Valerie propped her head in her hand and softly lamented : "How can I get away from here . . . how can I get away from here?" "You," remarked Valerie, "only owe fifty gulden . . but I've got a hundred and twenty against me. . ." "Yes, fifty gulden, but where am I to get them from?" "Don't shout, Vlasta," said Valerie, soothingly, "we'll get something together for you. I've got seven gulden, Elsa has three . . ." and she recounted a whole string of poetical names with a complete total of thirty-five gulden.

"I will get together the rest," I announced.

"Now let's celebrate the occasion," suggested Valerie, and from her room she brought in a bottle of wine and seven gulden, wrapped up in a handkerchief, which she gave to Vlasta. They kissed each other; then we drank, got into a festive mood and made plans. Valerie knew of an office where they provided situations. Vlasta

could only go somewhere as a shop-girl, for of household work she knew absolutely nothing. Valerie declared positively that something would turn up, and that she was glad that Vlasta, anyhow, would get away from that life. And as it often happens that when a man is himself on dry land, he tries to help another from the water by plans and advice at least, so we both began to arrange Valerie's life by our "ifs" and "perhapes." But she shook her head, stood up, gave us her hand, and with the words: "I'll manage somehow, children, to drag my battered life along," she went to bed.

In broad daylight I went out, reached home, took my Xenophon, my grammar, my exercise-books and made my way to school.

In the afternoon I tied my books up in a parcel, and took them to the second-hand bookseller's; a quarter of an hour later I made a journey with a second parcel. Palacký, Šafařík, Svatopluk Čech, Jirásek, Hellwald, Vrchlický, Arbes, Třebizský, and many others were priced by Taussig, Pascheles, and Alexander Storch. Ah, how lightly these leading figures of our literature were priced! Pascheles, on the Velké Staroměstské Náměstí, was the only one who paid at all reasonably. . .

In those two days I felt as if I had shaken off the burden of Raskolnikov's "human louse." My life seemed to have suddenly gained content,

meaning, value. I felt that I had sacrificed it for ever, and it stirred me to think that I had sacrificed it to so unhappy a being. In my fancies I surrounded my head with a gleam of romance, and it was particularly pleasant to me. I gazed with contempt upon the bourgeois, their wives and daughters whom I met in the street,—how prim and unpleasantly prudent these creatures were! How they would have turned away from me with the disdain proper to respectable ratepayers, if they had known!

And so I set this delicately-made Vlasta on the altar of my soul, pitied her, spoke to her in my thoughts, surrounded her with an ever brighter and ever holier radiance, until, as it often happens with love, I really adored her who was living within me and whom I had created for myself. I at once realised the contradiction in her dual being when I took her the money that evening. She accepted it, she thanked me,—but somehow in a matter-of-fact way that I had not expected. I did not consider that I had sat up two nights with her, that the pitch of her highly-strung mood had to reach slackening point, that it was not possible to wander for ever in the celestial spheres,—I took none of this into account, and I was chilled, mortified, disenchanted.

I gave her the money and did not want to detain her. She did not detain me long, pro-

mised that she would let me know how things turned out, and I went away.

When I got home, I sat down by my empty box and laughed bitterly at myself. But this ebbing of emotion was certainly followed by a corresponding flood—again I saw her in her unhappiness, making her confession ; the surge of emotion ceased, and I waited in suspense for her letter. . .

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Day upon day passed by, week upon week,—no letter came. For some time I endured that with the tranquil pride of an offended man, but at last I went to enquire. Vlasta had left Prague the very next day in the afternoon,—more than that they did not know. . .

I was embittered both against her and against myself. I had become quite accustomed to the array of a fiction-hero ; now my array was torn ; the novel in which I figured appeared to me a piece of utter folly, which robbed me of my beloved books ; its heroine was God knows who, her array had also lost its glory, and the worst torment was caused me by the reflection that she would think of me with something of the derision with which a designing female of that kind would generally remember an unsophisticated fool who had crossed her path. Supposing, that is, she remembers me at all, I reflected. . .

Man is never satisfied with the novels in which

life entangles him. He applies his standard and makes his demands. But life does things differently. Its novels flow along in a broad river-bed, they are seemingly without form, logic and meaning,—but only seemingly. If we had eternity's calm and angle of vision, we should find in them everything,—masterly form, iron logic and deep meaning. But we deal with life in the same way that we deal with nature; where we are short-sighted, we lay the blame on them, and where we do not comprehend, we speak of them as muddled-headed authors: but chiefly, I think, we reproach them for their lack of good taste and aesthetical feeling, as if these eternal masters were compelled to acknowledge the hoary standards of beauty set up by our school-books and the chameleon-like dictates of our ephemeral critics!

Now I reproached life for its lack of good taste and aesthetical feeling when, contrary to expectation, I received Vlasta's letter. She was, she said, serving in a ham and beef shop in the Celetná Ulice. A fine novel! The heroine behind the counter of a ham and beef shop! And she wrote that I was to come at ten o'clock when they closed, and that she had lots of things to tell me. I was there by nine; I sat down in the eating-room and Vlasta brought me the sausages I ordered. And she related that she had been obliged to go home to some village beyond

Chrudim, that she had been with relatives to have a complete change. To have a complete change,—these words reconciled me. . . Her hair was no longer dyed, her face no longer bore the weary signs of squandered nights,—it was as fresh in its youthfulness as a blossoming peach-spray. When the shop was closed, I accompanied her to Vinohrady, where she had a lodging. I felt that she was happy. She did not explain why she had not written, and I did not ask about it. She confided to me that a young assistant-teacher was courting her out in the country; this delighted her, and she told me about it in very great detail. Altogether on that evening there was another flood-tide of her whole nature; she arose from herself above the normal of ordinary things; there was an intensity in all her movements, glances and words, all was in a kind of superlative which allures, fetters and drags you along to admiration. But the flood-tide goes down and the normal of life is so drab and monotonous. . .

We parted in high spirits and met the next day in a matter-of-fact, sober, and prosaic mood. Again I accompanied her home. She complained of weariness, of men who molested her, and of the smell of sausages in the shop. I comforted her, but my comfort was feeble, and half-hearted, and I was glad when we reached the door of her lodging.

A whole series of such drab days went crawling on. After she had grumbled about her present grievances, her thoughts would leap back to memories of past days, of her former life. . . more and more frequently . . . I guessed that she was brooding about it, considering, comparing, passing judgment, and bewailing her lot. And I was silent, because I could find nothing to say and because the whole thing was beginning to be dull and objectionable.

Then one evening there was another flood-tide of emotion. For she had given notice to her employer, the ham-and-beef dealer, and had obtained a place as a vendor of soda-water. She was delighted with the change and the fresh outlook on life ; it pleased her to think how we would go to the country in the evening . . . she confided to me that the assistant-teacher who was in love with her, had already written twice to her, that although she did not care for him, she had written back, that I should not be angry with her, as I knew what I was to her, and the like. And I did not begrudge her this innocent game,—indeed, it gave me pleasure, since what I felt for her had long ceased to be love. I felt myself something of a guardian towards her, an elder brother, a man who has drawn someone out of the water and who is waiting until their life is restored.

Her kiosk stood at a deserted corner of Vinoh-

radly Square. . . At seven o'clock I would go to her, wait until she closed, then we went out into the country.

It happened on several occasions that when I arrived, I found people there. Well-dressed young men, with the insolent glances of coxcombs, stood about her, chatting and laughing. Vlasta was beaming. I departed unobserved. When she questioned me afterwards, I told her. She reddened, looked on one side, and explained that it could not be helped, she could not drive customers away.

Then one day I followed her and one of these young men. She closed the kiosk, they linked arms and walked towards her lodging, where they both vanished through the doorway.

The end, the end. . . I went home.

What was the good of all this, I thought to myself. I was torn by a corroding physical pain. Redemption, the return to an honourable life,—what folly. Moral regeneration,—where lay the flaw? Ah, a worm-eaten apple would be sound. The end, the end. . . But after all, I was glad of it. These tiresome walks, these tiresome conversations would cease. My conscience would be relieved of a task for which, properly speaking, I had no strength. I reviewed those days, and it appeared to me that I was clad in the array, not of the hero of a novel, but of a bourgeois moralist. I turned red with anger at the thought of how

ridiculous I must be to this chit of a girl with such a past, with such experience and such yearnings in her soul. . .

I slunk round the kiosk only once again. I saw that Vlasta had again dyed her hair an infamously light colour. This was the last chapter. The end, in good sooth, the end.

After that I got a letter from her. A despairing letter. She supposed I knew all. She was a worthless wretch. But I should not desert her. And if I did not come, she would go back to the place where we had met for the first time. . .

I threw the letter into the grate and went nowhere.

Then after a few days, another one came. She wrote curtly and categorically that if I did not come that day or the next, then on the following day she would most certainly be in that house.

I did not go. By chance I discovered later that Vlasta was in that house. I was impressed by the fact that she had kept her word, but it did not disturb me. As far as my feelings were concerned, she had died long before.

Two years later I was at "The Bear Cubs," a cabaret at Perštýn. Šmíd's company, which had just been got together, was giving a performance of vocal and instrumental music upon a small stage. Šmíd drew my attention to a new singer, petite and pretty, who was just about to appear,

but whose voice, it seemed, was not up to much. It was Vlasta. . . She came on in a red costume, her hair was dyed yellow, she assumed a military bearing on the stage and sang a song, the chorus of which ran :—

And he's a hussar,
And he has a sharp sword;
Firmly he can sit
Upon his black horse.
He gives the horse its oats,
And hurries to meet me.
The black horse and myself
He loves equally. . .

This chorus was sung the second time by a considerable part of the audience and Vlasta, marching in step along the stage, saluted in military style. When she had finished singing, she took a plate and went round making a collection. When she reached me, she lowered her eyes,—nothing more.

Then she sat down at the performers' table with some scabby young man who at once put his arm round her waist.

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And a few years later, as a result of this incident, I wrote my book “Magdalena.”

JAN NERUDA : THE VAMPIRE.

THE excursion steamer had brought us from Constantinople to the shore of the island Prin-kipo, and we disembarked. There were not many in the party. A Polish family, father, mother, daughter, and the daughter's husband, then we two. And I must not forget to mention that we had been joined on the wooden bridge leading across the Golden Horn in Constantinople by a Greek, quite a young man ; a painter perhaps, to judge by the portfolio which he carried under his arm. Long black tresses flowed over his shoulders, his face was pale, his dark eyes deeply sunken in their sockets. At first he interested me, especially because of his readiness to oblige and his familiarity with local affairs. But he had a good deal too much to say, and I soon turned away from him.

I found the Polish family all the more pleasant. The father and mother were worthy, kindly folk, the husband an elegant young man of unassuming and polished manners. They were travelling to Prin-kipo, with the object of spending the summer months there for the sake of the daughter, who was slightly ailing. From the pallor of the beautiful girl it appeared either that

she was just recovering from a severe illness, or that she was about to be attacked by one. She leaned upon her husband, showed a fondness for sitting down, and a frequent, dry cough interrupted her whispering. Whenever she coughed, her escort stood still in concern. He kept looking at her pityingly, and she at him, as much as to say : " There is really nothing the matter,—how happy I am ! " They were clearly convinced of recovery and happiness.

On the recommendation of the Greek, who had left us immediately by the landing stage, the family had hired a lodging at the inn which stands on the hill. The inn-keeper was a Frenchman, and his whole house, in accordance with French style, was arranged comfortably and neatly.

We lunched together, and when the heat of noon had abated a little, we all made our way up the hill to a pine-grove where we could refresh ourselves with the view. Scarcely had we discovered a suitable spot and had settled down, than the Greek once more made his appearance. He greeted us in an off-hand way, looked around him, and sat down only a few paces from us. He opened his portfolio and began to draw.

" I believe he has purposely sat close against the rock so that we can't look at his drawing," I said.

" We need not look," observed the young Pole,

“ we can see quite enough in front of us.” And after a while he added : “ It seems to me that he is including us in the foreground of his drawing, —let him !”

Truly, there was enough for us to see. There is no fairer and happier nook in the world than this Prinkipo. The political female martyr, Irene, a contemporary of Charlemagne, spent a month there “ in banishment ”—if I could pass a single month of my life there, the memory of it would make me happy for all the remainder of my days. Even that single day I spent there I shall never forget.

The air was as clear as diamond, so soft, so delightful, that it lapped all one’s soul afar. On the right, beyond the sea, towered the brown summits of Asia, on the left, the steep shore of Europe faded into the bluish distance. Close by, Chalki, one of the nine islands that form the “ archipelago of the prince,” rose up with its cypress woods into the silent height like a mournful dream, crowned with a large building,—this, a refuge for the infirm of spirit.

The waters of the Sea of Marmora were only slightly ruffled, and played in all colours like a sparkling opal. In the distance was the ocean, white as milk, then rose-tinted, then between two islands like a glowing orange, and beneath us of a beautiful greenish-blue like a transparent sapphire. It was alone in its beauty ; no large

vessels were to be seen. Only two small craft with English flags were slipping along hard by the shore. One was a steam-boat, the size of a watchman's booth, the other was manned by about twelve rowers, and when all their oars were lifted at the same time, it was as if molten silver were trickling from them. Artless dolphins were moving in their midst, and flew in long curves above the surface of the water. From time to time across the blue sky peaceful eagles soared, measuring out a boundary between two portions of the world.

The whole slope beneath us was hidden by blossoming roses, with whose fragrance the air was saturated. From the café near the sea, music, muffled by the distance, vibrated through the stainless air.

The impression was overwhelming. We all grew silent and sated our whole being with the prospect which savoured of paradise. The young Polish lady was lying on the turf with her head resting in her husband's lap. The pale oval of her delicate face gained a slight colour and tears suddenly began to flow from her blue eyes. Her husband understood; he bent forward and kissed tear upon tear. Her mother also began to shed tears, and I myself was strangely moved.

"Mind and body must needs be healed here," whispered the girl. "What a happy place!"

"God knows, I have no enemies, but if I had,

here I would forgive them !” declared the father with trembling voice.

And again all were silent. A feeling of beauty, of inexpressible sweetness, came upon all. Each one felt within him a whole world of happiness, and each one would have shared his happiness with the whole world. Each one felt the same, and so none jarred upon the other. We did not even notice that the Greek, after some hour or so, had arisen, closed his portfolio, and after greeting us again, had gently departed. We remained.

Finally, after some hours, when the distance was hiding itself in a dusky violet hue, which in the South is so magically lovely, the mother urged us to make our way back. We arose and strolled down to the inn, our steps as free and elastic as those of children without a care in the world.

Scarcely had we sat down than we heard quarrelling and abuse under the veranda. Our Greek was quarrelling there with the inn-keeper and we listened for our amusement.

The quarrel did not last long. “If I had no other guests here—” growled the inn-keeper, and came up the steps towards us.

“Would you kindly tell me, sir,” asked the young Pole of the inn-keeper, as he came along, “who this gentleman is, and what his name is?”

“Oh, who knows what the fellow’s name is,”

growled the inn-keeper, giving a vicious glance downwards. "We call him the Vampire."

"A painter?"

"A fine trade! He only paints corpses. If anybody in Constantinople or round about here dies, he always has a portrait of the corpse ready on the same day. The fellow paints in advance, and he never makes a mistake, the vulture."

The old Polish lady gave a cry of horror,—in her arms lay the daughter, swooning, white as a sheet.

And at the same instant the husband leaped down the small flight of steps, seized the Greek by the throat with one hand, and with the other clutched at the portfolio.

We quickly ran down after him. The two men were already scuffling in the sand.

The portfolio was flung down, and on one leaf, sketched in pencil, was the head of the young Polish girl,—her eyes closed, a sprig of myrtle around her brow.

ARNE NOVÁK : THE ADVENT OF SPRING
IN THE SOUTH.

AN IMAGINARY CONVERSATION.

(The scene is in the Corte Reale at Mantua on a late afternoon in November, 1354. Charles IV. meets with Petrarch, who is reading a book as he passes across the court.)*

CHARLES IV. : Poet, the evening is casting its cold and gloomy shadows upon your book.

PETRARCH : And yet I feel the spring and flowers. I hear the droning of bees and the measured tread of the grazing flocks. There is a strong fragrance of golden laburnum, and the dulcet cadence of the verses carries me away with the music of torrents drenched with the thawing ice of the Alps.

CHARLES IV. : Once more it is your beloved Virgil, herdsman and prophet, whom you have chosen as your teacher and friend. You do not surprise me ; there was a time when I, too, was fond of him. I even confess that in this very spot, above the waters of the Mincio, I have more than once bethought me of him who

*Charles IV. as Emperor of Germany. Charles I., as King of Bohemia. One of the greatest Czechs in history.

used to wander here in yearning and tumult. But have you ever found, poet, that your Virgil has at times become a perilous seducer for you?

PETRARCH : A perilous seducer, Sire? Perhaps you meant rather : A source of zeal and comfort? In him I have found the most joyful certainties when I was already wavering. . . ah, you do not know the terrors of my paths. . .

CHARLES IV. : They have led, from what I know, to the summits where a broad survey has entranced you, and where the wings of super-human self-fathoming have borne your human attributes yonder close to the footstool of the divine throne, so that we Christians were at a loss even for the breath of anguish at so haughty a sin.

PETRARCH : But if I ascended from towns and valleys somewhere to the clouds, was it not for the mere reason that I could no longer live in the depths where it was close and narrow even to stifling? There were moments when I drank from the sponge soaked with vinegar and gall, without knowing whether my sacrifice would deliver a single soul.

CHARLES IV. : Your comparison is blasphemous. Too often you sin through the pride of your sorrow, as other people sin through the pride of their joy.

PETRARCH : Yes, pride of sorrow, pride of sorrowful loneliness. How should you, Sire,

wise from childhood, the acme of human perfections, understand me? O would that someone of the living might come to understand me as Virgil, that benign departed, that silent wayfarer, in the realm of shadows understood me!

CHARLES IV. : The Christian Emperor is your friend, O pagan and haughty poet!

PETRARCH : For the which, my thanks, Sire ; but I am neither pagan nor overweening. I am merely a true and suffering man who seeks safety and equality of spirit.

CHARLES IV. : Where else will the arms of the balance which holds all destinies come more firmly to equipoise than at the feet of God?

PETRARCH : The pinions of your prayers soar thither, but my thoughts take root only in lowly and more human regions.

CHARLES IV. : And does your pagan poet lead you thus to salvation? I should marvel if you succeeded in convincing me of this.

PETRARCH : O, to convince you, Sire, to gain possession of your faith, to hold sway over your will, that you might remain with us, with the people, with your brothers and fellow-countrymen here, in Italy, here in the South.

CHARLES IV. : Do not forget that I am a Northerner. Black pine-forests overshadow the dark castles where my inmost thought

finds its God. The cold winds of the North set the bells swaying in the clouded town of my birth, that they may sing in the wondrously sweet language of my mother a penitent litany for a prodigal son. And haply already the chill and mournful snow is falling on the sad peaks that begird my native land.

PETRARCH : Wherefore, Sire, have you condemned the greatness of your spirit to such narrow confines of vain and austere allegiance? An allegiance which can but be a burden and a curse to you, who belong to the South, to Italy or Avignon, who might have been Augustus over the Tiber and the Arno, over rivers which sing to you in a wistful speech?

CHARLES IV. : It seems to me—if I understand your language aright—that the thought of home has marked me out somehow in the same way as your pagan poet did to you. But pray enlarge unto me, how could Virgil thus preserve and liberate you?

PETRARCH : I fear, Sire, that my words will not be a kindly entertainment for the shades of a November evening. It is chill, it is dark, and the fountain is lamenting piteously in the courtyard. At this moment the distant stars exhort us to slumber.

CHARLES IV. : Perhaps I must appeal to you as pressingly as the passionate and sinful queen of Africa appealed to Aeneas in Virgil? I am hearkening.

PETRARCH : But my utterance will be again only haughty grief. I stood isolated and deserted in the world. I had naught save my grief and my bitterness. My mistress, who meanwhile had changed my loftiest yearning into a wavering dream, died. My tranquility became loathsome to me. Mild and placid France suddenly appeared inhospitable to me. All the waters to which I bowed down were only mirrors of my distress, and not a day passed but I cursed them. All the winds, to which I entrusted my sorrow, dragged my thoughts into the cold eddy of despair somewhere near the feet of the frosty lord of hell, and there were moments when I feared that he, the mighty destroyer, bore my own countenance, sorrowful and set in hopeless fixity. I ascended mountains and there only my shadow, also a thing accursed, also an adulterer of despair, leered upon me.

CHARLES IV. : Why, you are not a priest, not a Christian?

PETRARCH : Sire, there are moments when I have a foreboding that our humanity is something of wider compass than Christendom, that the sacred grace does not vouchsafe us recovery from all spiritual wounds, that Christ has not redeemed us utterly from inherited sin—

CHARLES IV. : What stones of offence, poet, have you brought from Virgil's hell, that you

may sinfully enervate yourself, rolling them ever afresh to the summit?

PETRARCH : Ah, none at all. On Virgil's fields blossom the herbs of deliverance.

CHARLES IV. (*with a touch of irony*) : Haply I, too, could cull them, if indeed, in so doing, I did not become a heretic.

PETRARCH : Sire, man of mighty spirit and noble heart, come unto me, come with me, confide in me ! Across the centuries we clasp the hands of another, of a courageous stock who loved life and not death, who yearned for heroism and did not writhe in humility, a race of comrades, brothers, forebears. All that is great in the world was fashioned by these heroes, the men of the South, the Romans and the sons of Romans, the heirs of the language of Virgil. Barbarians silenced them, humbled them, hounded them out, and you, an heir of Augustus, surely do not long to be a barbarian. There is no life except in the South, not among the ruins, but in our own Roman realm. Your North is an evil dream, dark horror, which has saturated your veins with the blood of your mother. Your kindly favour, Sire, invites me ever afresh to your Northern city, which by your wisdom and love you have transformed into a wonderful legend ; I desire, I pine, I vow to come to you. Something lures me there almost inconceivably—the endeavour to per-

suade you that you may give the young and tractable nations to drink of the spirit of the South, and sate them with our new faith, our new hopes.

CHARLES IV. : You are a wondrous dreamer, poet! You, who are fain to be called an old and weary man, rave like a youth. For what is that but raving, when you desire to transform live and fervid nations into mere bondsmen of shadows, with which the pagan bard has quickened your brain.

PETRARCH : Ah, they are not shadows, they are not phantoms. The certainty that life and not death, courageous action and not penitent prayer shall deserve our whole love, draws closer to us those ancestors of old, from the army of Aeneas and Turnus, from the pastoral throng of Euryalus and Menalcus. Not alone do they clasp our hands and speak our language, but they are brothers and friends. Do you not know, Sire, that all the youth in Italy and France, all who were born to witness your wise and heroic deeds as a ruler, feel equally with me. To-day I am no longer alone. My pride is becoming the pride of joy. A new youth is casting anchor on the shores of Latium and is girding itself for the taking of Rome. All their songs are resounding, on all sides their hopes are hovering. Only a leader do we yet lack.

CHARLES IV. (*with irony*) : And your tribune,
your Achilles, your Roman?

PETRARCH : Has only arisen to gain *Your*
Majesty for our endeavours.

CHARLES IV. : Adventurers will scarcely suc-
ceed in winning me over, poets the rather.

PETRARCH (*agitatedly*) : Sire, be ours, be in
good sooth the Roman Emperor! Let the
ancestral blood in your veins strike up its song,
let your dreams of Avignon be transformed into
action. Your admirer, your servant, your
slave mourns at your feet . . . mourns, not on
his own behalf, but for the sake of thousands in
obscurity, and hundreds of thousands yet
unborn. Be as the spring-time, as the South,
as life! If, among Your Majesty's precious
metal there is any slag which burdens you, the
heat of a new youth will smelt it out, and the
gleaming and sunlit gold of your unscathed
empire will redden in the glorious radiance!
Night is now here, and you do not see my
mournful countenance—would that you did!
Longing and hope, tenderness and humility
appeal to you from it. To you it seems that it
is autumn, and that the world has grown old.
But that is a delusion; spring-time is drawing
near, and it is for you—you in very sooth—to
open its blossoming portal, that the budding of
a new youth may surge along like a wild moun-
tain torrent.

CHARLES IV. : I do not know whether the world has grown old. I know that I have grown old and that the words of a man of fifty sound like the prattling of a child to me who am so much younger. In the midst of our forests, at prayers, in the solitude of night, when the window panes are asparkle with the cold stars, old age comes too quickly. But there the spirit is exhorted to firmness,—I fear, perhaps even to pride, unworthy of a true Christian.

PETRARCH : Of a Christian, who lives righteously, that he may die vainly. Of an Emperor who longs for the virtues of an anchorite.

CHARLES IV. : Yes, it is meekness which becomes almost pride. I have longed to attain the unattainable, to guide my humanity to the superhuman.

PETRARCH (*with mournful irony*) : In the interest of barbarians.

CHARLES IV. : Perhaps my fellow-countrymen are barbarians as yet. They will no longer, God grant, be so. They will have neither the beauty, with which my youth in Avignon was entranced, nor the heroism that your ecstasy has conned from Virgil. They will have another beauty, another heroism. And they, I hope, will also look towards a new day.

PETRARCH : That they, the barbarians, may

come streaming, strengthened, and equipped, to our South ; that they may despoil our dreams and hinder the accomplishment of our hopes. Do you not feel, Sire, that you are enkindling your mother's blood against your father's. That you are rending your realm in twain. That you are making ready a descent on Italy by the barbarians?

CHARLES IV. : I confess to you, over-zealous poet, that in the stern nights of my solitude I have pondered on this outcome. But if I have nurtured Christian warriors for new contests, I have achieved right in that I have, at the same time, suppressed all pride, all self-love, all the stubbornness of humanity.

PETRARCH : Say rather all the heroic instincts of your being, mighty Sire. But yet did you never reflect that you,—Augustus and Trajan in one person,—that you are preparing war and rebellion, you who love and honour us? Do you not regret this strange and yet inevitable sacrifice of war to be?

CHARLES IV. : I pray God that the war may not become too great a sacrifice.

PETRARCH : There will be nothing left for me but to crave Providence that your barbarians may not be the victors. That I may not cease to cherish the faith of not having lived in vain, of not having been deceived by my Virgil. But

how the leaves rustle, and how chill the wind is as yonder with you in the North.

CHARLES IV. : Your voice trembles like your limbs. And I hear your anguish from the song of the fountain. It is time for you to seek, once more, the draught of rapture in your Virgil.

PETRARCH : I fear I shall open it where, amidst the verses, grow the blossoms of oblivion.

(They both go out in silence).

FRANĀ ŠRAMEK : JUNE.

A PLAY IN ONE ACT.

Persons :

Mrs. Ledynska

Lidka } her children
Jenik }

Loshan

(A modestly furnished room; the tawdry atmosphere of concealed poverty is betrayed by a few inferior ornaments. A sense of warm and intimate snugness fills this nook to the ticking of a large grandfather's clock. The golden vapour

of the afternoon sun sweeps through the window like a glorious cloud, which is the fore-runner of a dream of happiness. Behind the white thin curtain at the window Lidka is sitting with her sewing; a quivering patch of sunshine rests on her lap like the fondled head of some pet animal, which blinks its big happy eyes, while it enjoys endearments and nestles into the cosy warmth of the lap. Old Mrs. Ledynska, with the tender smile of autumn in all her features, is sitting in an old leather settee by the table reading the newspaper; from time to time she straightens her spectacles with a trembling hand and nods her head).

LIDKA (*drops her sewing into her lap; her eyes are as heavy as poppies at noon; then coming to the close of some dream or other, she whispers*): There . . . there it must be altogether different . . . there . . . (*She moves her head across the back of the chair, and passes her tongue wistfully over her burning and half-opened lips. Then suddenly she raises her head again and as if she were speaking to somebody, she says, in a soft and reproving tone*): Do you really like me so much?—

MRS. LEDYNSKA (*with a start*): Did you say something?

LIDKA (*with a startled and jerky voice*): No, nothing . . . I only just . . . only just said something to myself. . .

MRS. LEDYNSKA (*smiling in a kindly manner*) : Like a little bird. It chirps and chirps . . without knowing why. It only just chirps. (*After a pause.*) And I'm just reading something that really is so touching. Our countrymen have been in France again, and they were received there like brothers. The President himself made them sit down next to him, and spoke such nice words about us Czechs. And in the street, too,—Frenchman upon Frenchman, all calling out : “ Long live the Czechs ! ” Like a tree shaking blossoms upon our deputies (*nodding her head*). Like a poor relation paying a visit to a rich man, and the rich man giving him the place of honour and greeting him in front of all the rest . . . Ah, the French . . the French . . . One can't help liking them (*folding up the newspaper*). Remind me, Lidka,—I must read that to Jenik . . .

LIDKA : No, mother . . . Jenik had better not read it.

MRS. LEDYNSKA : What . . . why shouldn't he read it?

LIDKA : Why . . . well. You know he laughs at things like that.

MRS. LEDYNSKA (*somewhat offended*) : . . . he laughs, he . . .

LIDKA (*suppressing a smile*) : It always strikes me like a peasant walking on a carpet. You

know how he talks? (*she imitates a male voice*). Aha, the thermometer's crawling up. Let's bandage it in ice. . . Mother, do take this syrup away,—it makes my teeth chatter . . . (*bursts out laughing*). That's just how he talks. . .

MRS. LEDYNSKA (*forcing herself to laugh as well*) : Why, yes . . . you take him off quite well . . . (*then in deep thought about something*). But sometimes it quite makes my eyes swim, when once he starts. As if he dragged everything up by the roots.

LIDKA (*in sudden embarrassment*) : Mother !

MRS. LEDYNSKA : Well?

LIDKA : Are . . . are the others just like Jenik?

MRS. LEDYNSKA (*pretending to be angry*) : Tut, tut . . . like him, indeed. They have claws instead of a tongue, and they never wear their heart on their sleeve (*growing calmer*). Well . . . Jenik knows a lot, he's learnt a lot. (*Looking at the clock.*) But he is having his sleep out to-day ; it's getting on towards four. . . Still, it was quite broad daylight when he came home. I expect he had a proper good time again. Well, he is taking a good nap. I almost think I ought to wake him up. (*She goes to the door of the side-room.*)

LIDKA (*dreamily*) : They never wear their heart on their sleeve. . . (*From the door of the little room Jenik comes violently towards Mrs.*

Ledynska. He is already dressed, and his face is flushed from sleep, suffused, as it were, with a surplus of energy : in stockings.)

JENIK : Morning, all !

MRS. LEDYNSKA (*surprised*) : He comes flying in like a demon . . . why, we didn't even hear you get up. Well . . . well, you have been sleeping a time.

JENIK (*flinging himself on the chair by the table*) : Like a top, mother, like a top. . . But I'm hungry,—my stomach's making most uncalled-for remarks. My goodness me, Lidka, do move yourself . . . kindly show some slight trace of feeling. . . The food's got to appear on the table, at once. . . Women, women . . . ye shall serve man, somebody once remarked in an enlightened moment . . . Vermicelli soup, mother, eh? I had a dream about vermicelli, last night. It looked like stay-laces, but it was vermicelli, for all that, ha, ha. . . Look alive, my dears, and I'll whistle to you. . . (*He whistles a march, while Mrs. Ledynska puts plates on the table.*)

LIDKA (*who has run into the kitchen, calls out from there*) : The soup is still warm, but the cutlet—

MRS. LEDYNSKA : Shall we warm up the cutlet for you?

JENIK : . . . over here with it, I'll manage to warm it up somehow. (*Tapping Mrs.*

Ledynska on the back), Mother, you've grown since yesterday. . .

MRS. LEDYNSKA (*laughing*) : Making fun of your mother. . .

JENIK : No, but really . . . (*suddenly*) : Mother, have you got any bilberries? Let's have some bilberries to the cutlet.

MRS. LEDYNSKA : You *have* got an appetite to-day, again.

LIDKA (*comes from the kitchen and pours soup on to a plate*) : Perhaps it'll be warm enough.

JENIK (*catching hold of Lidka tight by the arm*) : Lidka, Lidka . . . our trees are sprouting heavenwards, ha, ha . . . ! A new species, northern type, fir-trees . . . or goodness knows what, d'you hear? Pop go the corks inside, out gushes the foaming purple, like a raging red plume . . . oh . . . (*he waves the spoon*) : Don't you think I've quite got the royal manner? (*He begins to eat greedily.*)

LIDKA : You're in an excellent humour to-day.

JENIK : Absolutely dazzling, what?

LIDKA : It suits you.

JENIK : Only not too much salt. You've put too much salt in the soup.

LIDKA : As if you knew anything about it. . .

JENIK : All right, I won't say another word.

MRS. LEDYNSKA (*bringing a plate with cutlet and bilberries*) : Shall Lidka go for some beer?

JENIK : I *am* thirsty, but . . . no, never mind . . .

LIDKA : I'll go and tidy up the room. . .

MRS. LEDYNSKA : You stay where you are . . . I'll see about that myself. It's always a little amusement for me.

JENIK (*pushing away the empty plate*) : I was reminded of you last night.

MRS. LEDYNSKA (*affecting horror*) : Oh-h-h!!

JENIK : Ha, ha, it was really getting on for morning, though.

LIDKA : Now we're going to hear something.
(*Sits down at the table.*)

JENIK (*eating the cutlet*) : Well, we landed ourselves into one of those shanties. The youth of to-day—mother, won't you tell us something about the youth of to-day? Well then, in this shanty . . . yes, there were some partitions in this shanty. Tra-la-la-hop!

LIDKA (*inquisitively*) : Well, and . . . what?

MRS. LEDYNSKA : Jenik, perhaps you'd better . . .

JENIK : Ha, Lidka is inquisitive.

LIDKA : You poke fun at everything—

JENIK : Well, let's stick to the truth : I do laugh. Without this salad I shan't digest a thing—

LIDKA (*with expectant inquisitiveness*) : Well now, Jenik, what was there in this shanty?

MRS. LEDYNSKA : Don't ask him about it, it's a lot of nonsense, anyhow.

JENIK : There were, there were . . . partitions, and . . . ha, ha . . .

MRS. LEDYNSKA (*angrily*) : Just kindly keep these pleasant things to yourself. Nice places you are remembering . . .

JENIK : Stop, mother. . . You see Lidka's well on the way to blushing.

LIDKA (*shrugging her shoulders*) : I don't understand it a bit.

JENIK (*pointedly*) : . . . a very white blossom, ha, ha. . .

MRS. LEDYNSKA : Jenik, I've told you to leave off. . . If you've nothing better to say .

JENIK : 'Pon my soul, I don't know. . . (*After a while.*) Those bilberries those bilberries. . . You scent the woods, the heather, the resin . . . your heart runs about bare-footed, and gets torn on the brambles . . . the cuckoo wails. . . (*He pretends to hiccough and slaps himself on the back several times.*) Ha, ha, here we have to put up with a sort of pocket edition of nature. And then you wonder that I laugh. Everything's faked up here, everything calls out : Make no mistake, old chap, I'm not butter, I'm—margarine.

LIDKA : Mother, that's our special department again. . .

MRS. LEDYNSKA : It's all a lot of silly chatter. . .

JENIK (*finishing the meal*) : I notice that the opinions vary . . . (*With pathos.*) Lidka, you enrol under my banner. Let youth keep to-

gether. Down with crinoline.

MRS. LEDYNSKA (*with feigned anger*): Get right into his clutches, Lidka.

LIDKA (*excitedly taking in every movement of Jenik*): Jenik's right down fervent to-day!

JENIK (*pushing aside his plate, breathlessly*): My . . . dear . . . good . . . people . . .

MRS. LEDYNSKA: There's something a little different about you to-day, Jenik. Your eyes are as bright as glow-worms. . .

JENIK: That's because it's June, and then—

LIDKA: And then. . .

JENIK (*with a deep sigh*): And then . . . then. (*Dreamily.*) Last night there was lightning about. . .

MRS. LEDYNSKA: How you are rambling on, to be sure! (*She laughs.*)

LIDKA (*after a pause; with a soft and timid voice*): Were any girls there too. . .?

JENIK (*suddenly glancing at her; then dryly*): Why, of course; lots of girls. Coriandoli, Corso (*feels in his pocket, takes out a handful of confetti, and throws it at Lidka*). It was jolly. . .

LIDKA: But, Jenik (*brushing away the shreds of paper*) did you throw that at the girls. . .?

JENIK: And the girls at us.

LIDKA (*pondering*).

MRS. LEDYNSKA: Come, come . . . what is the meaning of this?

JENIK : Mother's just like Tolstoy. (*Suddenly to Lidka*) : Have you finished "Anna Karenina" yet?

LIDKA (*with a start*) : Yes ; do you want it?

JENIK : I want to lend it to somebody.

LIDKA (*after a while*) : But there was a lot I didn't understand. You know, Jenik. . . (*she stops short for a moment*) one can scarcely altogether condemn Anna. (*Shyly.*)

JENIK : Why . . . who wants to condemn her, then. . . ? Who would cast the first stone . . . ?

LIDKA : But when—

JENIK (*sharply*) : But when . . . that'll do, if you please. I oughtn't to have given you the thing to read. There they scatter ashes on the red blossom, instead of pressing it fervently to their lips. But you don't understand that.

LIDKA (*softly*) : I don't understand? (*Suddenly.*) Well, perhaps I ought to, then . . . ?

JENIK (*bursting into laughter*) : Lidka, Lidka . . . you must wait,—some day I'll explain it all to you.

MRS. LEDYNSKA : Now I'll go and tidy up meanwhile. But . . . do you remember, Jenik, you were going to take me to the Variété to-day?

JENIK : Hm, so I was. Well, I suppose we can go. I've got time to-day. . .

MRS. LEDYNSKA : As long as you don't find some excuse again. I should like to go there for once. Lidka shall run down to Hořický's

while we're away. . . Perhaps it wouldn't do for her.

JENIK (*laughing*) : Very well, I don't mind. (*Looking at the clock.*) But hurry up . . . we must go soon. We'll stop at Novák's on the way and kill two birds with one stone. We'll have an evening snack, too, at some provision shop on the way.

MRS. LEDYNSKA : As you like. . . Well, I'll make haste. (*Enters the side room.*)

JENIK : Lidka, bring me the cigarettes from the little table! (*Lidka hurries out and returns with a box of cigarettes. She lights one for Jenik. After a pause.*)

LIDKA (*timidly*) : Jenik, why are you like that to-day?

JENIK : Like what?

LIDKA : Why, you are so tender . . . so happy.

JENIK : Aha!

LIDKA : To-day, you haven't got your irritating laugh. You do laugh, but it's a different laugh.

JENIK : Aha!

LIDKA : You know, I thought—

JENIK : . . . you thought . . .

LIDKA : Well . . .

JENIK : I'm getting quite inquisitive.

LIDKA : Well—that you had fallen in love.

JENIK (*looks at her for a moment, then bursts out laughing*) : Why, Lidka, Lidka . . . that's really great.

LIDKA : Isn't it true, then?

JENIK (*a trifle uneasily*) : Oh, but . . .

LIDKA : Do tell me, do tell me, Jenik . . .

JENIK (*somewhat forcedly*) : What in the name of goodness am I to tell you?

LIDKA (*stroking his hand*) : I won't tell anybody . . . Jenik . . . I won't. You know, I think I should look upon you in quite a different way . . . that it would be such a nice thing.

JENIK (*deep in thought*) : Hm . . . yes . . . yes . . .

LIDKA : Jenik, please do . . .

JENIK (*fixing his eyes on her, then for a moment half-closing the lids in meditation; after which, suddenly*) : Come here, Lidka. . . (*Draws her on to his knees; after a while*) : So I've got to confess, then . . .

LIDKA (*passes her hands over his face; nods.*)

JENIK (*dreamily*) : How it did lighten last night.

LIDKA : And you are really happy?

JENIK : No, no . . . that's not it. Or perhaps it is, though. Happy as the month of June out of doors. Happy to stifling beneath the great burden of blossoms. As happy as that. Well, I don't know. I ask for no reasons, Lidka, none at all. If there's a flood, let there be a flood, then . . . (*In a whisper.*) Such a beautiful flood . . .

LIDKA (*with a sob in the modulation of her voice; closing her eyes*) : Such a terribly beautiful flood.

JENIK : You women are so strange, Lidka. A hundred times we escape from you,—a hundred times we hold forth and declare solemnly that you drain our strength like sponges . . . and a hundred times we return to endure our June-tide. The devil is in us. No, no . . . Lidka, don't get angry, don't think about it. But . . . *(after a moment)* it is sweet to die, though, in the glow of a heat like that. . .

LIDKA : Jenik ; *(a wailing note comes into her voice)* I felt June to-day too. I felt it there by the window.

JENIK : You must open your breast and ask nothing of why or of wherefore . . . June will come. . .

LIDKA *(suddenly)* : Let me be, Jenik. I feel as if I were close on stifling, and . . .

(She stands up and bursts out sobbing ; then she kneels down again by the chair and lays her head on the table.)

JENIK *(looking at her in surprise)* : Lidka. *(Then nodding his head and murmuring feebly)* : June is here, June . . .

LIDKA *(raises her head and fixes Jenik with a deep glance full of tears : suddenly she springs up and embraces him violently)* : Jenik, Jenik, Jenik . . . now you will be so dear to me. . . Now I know . . . now I know. . . You'll love her really, won't you, now? Ah, heavens, that must be beautiful, so beautiful.

JENIK (*takes hold of her head and looks into her eyes; nodding his head ponderingly*) : Who is to still such longing as this? Lidka, I hope you may. . .

MRS. LEDYNSKA (*entering*) : My goodness me—

JENIK (*joyfully*) : Mother, don't cross the threshold, or . . .

LIDKA (*jumping up suddenly, embarrassed*) : Yes—

JENIK : You see, mother, Lidka is angry with you. She wanted to coax secrets out of me and now you've spoilt it. . .

LIDKA : Oh, no, mother, I know it, I know all about it now. . . Jenik has—

JENIK : Shhhh!

LIDKA : I know now. (*She starts dancing, stops and bends suddenly out of the window into the street*) : My dears, what lovely air . . . June, June, June. . .

MRS. LEDYNSKA : Something has come over you to-day—

JENIK (*laughing*) : Don't you worry about that, mother.

MRS. LEDYNSKA : Well, now, I'm sure I don't begrudge it you.

JENIK : That was a very nice thing to say. Thank mother for it, Lidka.

LIDKA (*looking out of the window*) : Wait a bit—who can that be? Jenik, there's some

gentleman walking up and down in front of the window, and staring up here.

JENIK : Come away from the window now and stop looking out.

MRS. LEDYNSKA (*taking some clothes from the wardrobe*) : I needn't put on much finery, eh, Jenik?

JENIK : Why, what for . . . in the gallery—

LIDKA : Jenik !

JENIK : Well, what is it?

LIDKA : That gentleman has such strange eyes—

JENIK : Come away from that window, I tell you !

LIDKA (*softly*) : Gracious, that's funny, Jenik, he's waiting for somebody, come and have a look.

JENIK : Mother, Lidka has regularly got the fidgets. (*Gets up and goes to the window*) : Well, now, who is it you're looking at, Lidka, you crazy girl? Why, hang it all, that's Loshan. He must be looking for me. (*Calls out into the street*) : Hallo, old fellow ! Are you looking for me? Don't cool your heels down there,—just pop up here a moment. (*Coming from the window*) : And I'll receive him here. (*Softly to Mrs. Ledynska*) : You know, he likes to do a bit of borrowing, so he's afraid to come straight up.

LIDKA (*in some alarm*) : What's that you're saying, Jenik?

JENIK : Oh, nothing.

LIDKA (*scared*) : And he's coming up here?

JENIK : Well, and what of it? Really, my dear girl. You've got the fidgets quite badly.

LIDKA (*fingering at her dress with jerky movements, smoothing her hair, then leaning with her hands against the back of the chair; as if made rigid.*)

The bell rings outside.

JENIK : Mother, open the door and ask him to come up.

MRS. LEDYNSKA : What am I to call him?

JENIK : Ha, ha, let it be Master Scapegrace. He does a bit of writing.

MRS. LEDYNSKA (*hurrying out*) : There's always something to be learnt from you. . . . (*Outside.*) Please come this way.

Enter LOSHAN (*in his exterior there is an aggressive air of scornful unconcern; his eyes shift about in search of prey.*)

JENIK : Come along inside. . . How are you, old chap? My mother . . . my sister . . . my friend, Loshan . . .

LOSHAN (*bowing off-hand*) : Don't let me put you out . . .

JENIK (*pushing a chair towards him*) : Take a seat.

LOSHAN (*sitting down*) : I was walking about down there quite a long while . . .

JENIK : Lidka here made me come and look.

LOSHAN : Ah, indeed. Yes, the young lady was looking out of the window. (*Drinks Lidka in with his eyes; from this moment his glances move continually in her direction and hold her with a peculiar kind of magnetism.*)

JENIK : Why didn't you come up?

LOSHAN : Oh, I managed to work off my constitutional at the same time like that. Besides, I—had—nothing—important to come for. I wanted you to let me have (*as if embarrassed for a moment*); yes, I wanted Hamsum's "Pan."

JENIK : I think I can oblige you. Wait a bit, I'll just look. (*Goes into his room.*)

LOSHAN : I ought to be grateful to the young lady for relieving me from my long vigil . . .

LIDKA (*gives a start when Loshan addresses her; her eyes assume a troubled and restless look*) : Yes, I thought at once, when you kept looking up at the window—

LOSHAN (*with a quick glance in the direction of Mrs. Ledynska, who is taking the plates into the kitchen; then to Lidka, effectively muffling his voice*) : Yes, I did look. I had to look, just as we have to look when we are walking through a field and a sky-lark begins to sing above our heads. Ah, that's how it was : a sky-lark began to sing. I sought it with my eyes. . . I've never seen you before,—I suppose you never go out anywhere. . . That's how

a man discovers America, by chance,—the fragrance of unknown shores shows him the way . . . until his head is dizzy with this fragrance. How peculiar it was : I was walking about, and just at that moment you ran to the window ; never have I seen such eyes as you had at that instant ; you were leaning out of the window, and your eyes were drinking everything in, in, in. . .

(*As Mrs. Ledynska enters*) : I was just saying, madam, that I envy Jenik such an idyllic home.

MRS. LEDYNSKA : My gracious . . . but he doesn't appreciate it one bit. (*Sitting down on the chair.*)

LOSHAN (*dejectedly*) : I've been alone for a long, long time. (*His glance turns aside and is fixed ravenously upon Lidka.*)

JENIK (*returning from his room with a book ; laughing*) : Has Loshan been saying something frightfully rude to you? You know, he's—shall I tell them, Loshan? . . . You know, he's a most awfully rude fellow, and doesn't care a rap for anything. . .

LOSHAN (*watching Jenik anxiously for a moment*) : You're only pulling my leg, Ledynský. . . .

JENIK : Ha, ha, ha !—Well, it won't do your leg any harm, at any rate . . . but . . . (*with a twinkle in his eyes*) . . . what do you want "Pan" for?

LOSHAN : Well, I hardly know how to put it?
I should like to shake hands with Lieutenant Glahn once more—something of that sort.

JENIK : Stop up your ears, mother. And you, too, Lidka. I want to ask Loshan a little confidential question : weren't you smitten with a certain Edvarda. . . ?

LOSHAN (*casts unnoticed a glance at Lidka; a great thirst lurks in the morbid glitter of her eyes*) : I won't come out with the strong remarks you expect, but this I will say. . . But after all, what should I say. . . ? It's utter nonsense. (*Lidka rises and goes into the kitchen.*) It's nonsense, Ledynsky. Absurdities like that will come into our minds. I'll tell you, some day, about just such a piece of absurdity. It'll make you laugh, ha, ha. . . Such a very peculiar incident. Or perhaps it isn't such a very peculiar incident, after all. No, I'll tell you about it some day,—it will make you laugh, ha, ha! (*Rising.*)

JENIK : You're going already?

LOSHAN : And what about to-night,—aren't you going anywhere?

JENIK : I'm going with mother to the Variété to-day.

LOSHAN : You're going to the Variété, are you? (*To Mrs. Ledynska*) It will be a nice entertainment for you and the young lady, madam.

JENIK : Oh, no, Lidka isn't going,—she'll look after the house.

LOSHAN (*his face twitches a little, imperceptibly, only with a slight overshadowing*) : The young lady will stay at home? Hang it, what was I going to say? Why, I believe it's clean gone out of my head. Well, it's of no consequence, after all. Thanks, Ledynsky, for the favour. I'll say good day, madam.

MRS. LEDYNSKA : I'm glad to have seen you, Pan Loshan.

JENIK : Good-bye, good-bye, old chap. Give us a look up another time. (*Leads Loshan through the kitchen.*)

JENIK (*returning from outside*) : I'll wager my head he wanted to borrow money from me.

MRS. LEDYNSKA : What a curious person he is!

JENIK : He is curious.

MRS. LEDYNSKA : I'll go and put on my things in your room,—somebody else might pay us a call. (*Takes the clothes and goes towards the side room.*)

JENIK (*goes after her and asks through the door*) : Mother, where's Lidka gone?

MRS. LEDYNSKA (*from the room*) : Lidka? Where could she have gone? (*At this moment Lidka enters from outside; she is pale, her gait is heavy, and her eyes are dilated and are fixed unsteadily upon some vague object.*)

JENIK (*goes up to her and takes her by the hands*): Good heavens, Lidka, what's the matter with you? Where have you been?

LIDKA (*shakes her head as if she were passing through mists: with an endeavour to smile*): I've been down at Hořický's . . . I ran quickly up the stairs. . . I came over faint for a moment . . . But I'm all right again now.

JENIK (*musingly*): I oughtn't to have told you that.

LIDKA: What oughtn't you to have told me. . . ?

JENIK: Well, that it's June outside . . . and . . .

LIDKA (*her face bursts into radiance, as it were, from within*): That it's June outside. . .

JENIK: I've been whispering such curious things to you . . .

LIDKA (*in suspense*): And were they untrue?

JENIK: They weren't untrue, but . . .

LIDKA (*joyfully, passionately*): They weren't untrue, they weren't untrue! (*Suddenly throwing her arms round Jenik's neck; softly*): Jenik, do you know what I'm reminded of? When we were speaking about Anna Karenina to-day, you said: Who wants to condemn her, who wants to cast the first stone. . . ? You remember saying that, don't you? Yes, now I know, now I know all. . .

JENIK (*freeing himself from her embrace*):

What a young hoyden you are, Lidka . . . !

LIDKA: Are you angry with me for that?

JENIK : On the contrary. I like you for being so, but . . .

LIDKA : But?

JENIK : Well, men are apt to squander such a store, when they find it in a woman.

LIDKA (*interrupts him suddenly with a springlet of ice in her voice*) : Stop. . . Stop. . .

MRS. LEDYNSKA (*enters from the side-room*) : There, I'm all ready now.

JENIK : Mother, we came within an ace of losing Lidka!

MRS. LEDYNSKA (*frightened*) : What's that you say?

JENIK : Oh, nothing . . . Lidka came over a bit faint, that's all. (*He enters the side-room to fetch his hat and stick.*)

MRS. LEDYNSKA : I was quite frightened for the moment.

LIDKA (*forcing a smile*) : I was playing at being ill.

MRS. LEDYNSKA (*concernedly*) : But there's nothing the matter now, eh? Perhaps I'd better stay at home.

LIDKA (*quickly*) : Nothing of the kind. What a silly idea to think of.

JENIK (*returning with his hat on and lighting a cigarette*) : Well, take care of yourself, Lidka . . . I suppose you'll go down to Hořický's, won't you. . .?

MRS. LEDYNSKA : Keep the door well bolted

when you go, Lidka . . . and stay down at Hořický's, we'll come and fetch you afterwards. . . (*Exit.*)

LIDKA (*taking fright*): Mother. . .

MRS. LEDYNSKA (*in the door-way*): Well, what is it?

LIDKA (*in some depression*): Perhaps after all you'd better . . .

MRS. LEDYNSKA: Shall I stay at home?

LIDKA (*with a sudden burst of violent laughter*): No . . . no . . . it only just occurred to me . . . no . . . you go now, Jeník's waiting.

JENÍK (*from outside*): Come along, mother, do . . . bye, bye, Lidka.

MRS. LEDYNSKA: Come and bolt the door after us.

(*Exeunt both.*)

LIDKA (*returns after a moment; runs in violently, stands still in the middle of the room, clasps her face in her hands*): He said that he's coming . . . heavens . . . he's coming! (*She runs to the window. Her eyes stare into the street, she clutches the window-sill convulsively; for a moment she remains in this position; suddenly she is shaken by a spasm. She runs out quickly, and can be heard opening the door outside. She returns, her lips distorted by a hysterical smile, her eyes melting with fire; she goes to the window, plucks a few sprigs of myrtle, and sinks down overwhelmed*

in the chair by the window. Then with unsteadily groping hands she twines a sprig of myrtle in her hair, and throws the other sprigs on the floor. Outside, somebody is coming up. The sound of coughing is heard. Lidka's eyes fasten upon the door with a dark look of feverish thirst, while her lips are parted vacantly. The door opens and Loshan enters. He catches sight of Lidka; a cynical smile disfigures his lips. . .)

(Curtain.)

SERBIAN :

SIMO MATAVULJ : THE LATIN BOY. A TALE FROM MONTENEGRO.

ON St. Peter's Day, towards sunset, the serdar Jovan Kněžević, betook himself to his large threshing-floor, which lay behind his house. He was a small, dark man, with a rosy face and a beard which had slightly turned gray. He had donned festive attire. Over his green dolama* he had flung his toka,† while two silver-mounted pistols and a long knife were thrust into his belt. With his chibuk flung across his shoulders, he was stamping and tripping about on the threshing-floor. From time to time he came to a standstill and then turned once more around his shadow, in which he examined the end of the blade that projected from his belt at the upper part of his thigh.

Suddenly someone of the community called out :

“Serdar, we have come to have a chat with you for an hour or so.”

*Long under garment.

†Kind of silver breastplate.

“ You are welcome !” he replied and sat down on one of the two round stones which lay on top of each other in the middle of the threshing floor, where the threshing animals were tethered.

While he was filling his pipe, four men came up, all without vests. They sat down on the paving which lies beneath the stone enclosure of the threshing-floor.

“ What a heat !” exclaimed the oldest among the arrivals. He had a huge moustache, and with his sleeve he wiped the sweat from his forehead.

The three other fellows were also panting, and they too were wiping the sweat away, which was oozing from them as if they had come up at the double, although they had really been walking quite slowly.

The serdar adjusted the tinder on the flint, and as he lighted his pipe, he exclaimed :

“ Yes, a heat such as we have every year about this time.”

“ And you, cousin, have put on your jacket into the bargain. . . It is a marvel that you do not melt beneath it !” added one of the younger men.

The serdar frowned, and his eyebrows were drawn together ; he seemed to have become angry at this remark. He blew some clouds of smoke into the air, and then, turning to the speaker, he exclaimed :

“ I have been used to that from my childhood,

and have kept it up to this very day. You could go about even without trousers, if you wished, but we old Montenegrins do not consider what is most pleasant, but what is more becoming. Melt? As if I were made of sugar! What braggarts the youth of to-day are, and how feeble they have grown. . .”

The little fellow flushed as if glowing coals had been scattered over him. His comrades looked at him with reproachful glances. But the one with the big moustache exclaimed soothingly :

“Do not chide him, serdar, it is no great matter. He did not mean to affront you. Go, Lale, ask pardon of your cousin!”

Lale kissed Jovan's hand. The latter gave a kindly smile and fondled his head. This was his answer; he was gracious in a trice,—a true “old Montenegrin.”

The serdar had not a big family. Besides his wife he had only a grandson named Ivan, and a daughter, Dunja. She was a girl as sturdy as her father, but she was taller than he. She had great dark eyes and splendid long hair. The lads often crept secretly into the serdar's courtyard, to watch the girl as she was combing her hair. The plaits came down below her waist. And when she ran barefoot in her chemise across the courtyard, the ground fairly shook beneath her tread. Little Ivan was scarcely two months old when his father fell in battle at the time of

Dervish Pasha. His mother died soon afterwards.

In this fashion it had come about that the serdar's house, which was once so famous, had remained almost without male successors. Now all the old man's hopes were centred upon the five-year-old boy and a good husband for his daughter, if God willed it so.

Silence continued on all sides. The younger men were waiting for the serdar to speak, but he was gazing abstractedly at the light of his pipe.

Suddenly steps were heard in the distance. About twenty more members of the family now came up. They greeted each other and sat down, some on the flagstones, the others with their feet crossed upon the enclosure of the threshing-floor.

As there were also some older men among the new-comers, the conversation resumed its course. The serdar himself was now in the best of humours. He began to banter first one and then the other, in turn. This pleased them all very much, for he was a wit, the like of whom could not be found far and wide. He had just overwhelmed a distant relative with the whole power of his wit, when someone among those present exclaimed :

“ Stop, stop, wedding guests are coming to us ! ”

Everyone turned round and general laughter ensued. About twenty of the more distant towns-

folk were approaching as wedding guests, one after another. But that was as much as to say that they were coming to pay a visit to a chieftain. The serdar again stared angrily in front of him, for he was vexed with the man who had mocked at the arrivals by the name in question.

"Let them come, and make room for the people!" he cried, and rose up from his seat. The others present also rose up on one side when the first guests had advanced closer.

"Just look, by God, the little Latin boy is among them too, and not among the last ones, either!" exclaimed the same waggish lad who had given them all the name of wedding guests.

"Do not speak so, my children!" the serdar suddenly burst forth. "If he is among them, it is fitting for him to be among them. Surely you know whose son he is?"

"By God, he is a handsome lad, too," exclaimed the man with the big moustache, "and we only tease him because we like him. . . But we will stop doing it."

"Welcome!" exclaimed the serdar. "Come, brothers, and the best of thanks for your visit!"

They all embraced and then sat down. About forty of them were now sitting down together on the threshing-floor. Dunja, her mother, and little Ivan watched the company from the threshold of the kitchen door. Women were leaning against the enclosure, and even little children

stopped in their play for a moment, to feast their eyes on the sight of the grown-ups.

As long as man could remember, the assembly of the people had been held on the same spot where the serdar's threshing-floor was now. Jovan's father, the serdar Mićun, had paved the place with flag-stones and provided it with an enclosure, and such an assembly-place was not to be found far and near.

After each had questioned the other as to how it fared with him, his family and his distant relatives, the serdar turned to the "little Latin boy."

He had been given the nickname of "Latin" because his face was fair and tender,—just like a Latin boy. But his real name was Luka Lipovac. He was the orphan son of the famous hero Kosta Lipovac.

He was sitting directly opposite the serdar.

"Well, how fares it with you, Luka?"

"Well, God be thanked!" replied the latter, blushing slightly.

"And tell me, pray, do these lads tease you, at all?"

"A little," answered Luka with a forced laugh.

"But from to-day onwards they have no more right to do so!" observed one of the Kněžević family.

"Oh, why from to-day onwards?" came a shout from several sides.

"Because early to-day he surpassed all in stone-throwing, with the exception of Kićun!"

"Is it possible?" exclaimed the serdar in astonishment.

"Yes, by God, it is!" cried several with one accord.

"Then come hither, that I may embrace you!"

And the serdar gave the youth a kiss upon the forehead. The latter was so abashed at this, that he did not know what he should do with his hands. He drew them across his upper lip, upon which, however, not even the down of a moustache was so far to be observed; at the same time his eyes were beaming with clear fire, and he was splendid to look upon in his beauty.

The rest of the people were not altogether pleased with this, and someone called out:

"First of all we must make sure whether we were contending in sober earnest, or whether it was only in play."

"Don't make any pretence," cried the others.

"There were close on thirty of us lads who saw it. Each one of you did his level best to beat him, but he beat you all, Kićun alone excepted."

There was a silence after these words. The older men thought it would be best to broach another subject. Then one of the Lipova men stood up and cried:

"You would hardly believe, serdar, all the things that Luka does in order to appear more

of a man. The whole livelong day he roves about in this heat, and why? To get a brown tan! But he cannot succeed. It is true that he will not admit it, but finds an excuse of one sort or another; but I know only too well what makes him do it. We laugh at him. The young women envy him for his milky face. Besides that, he rarely practises stone-throwing, jumping, and running. . .”

“That is all to his credit,” the serdar interrupted him. “A stalwart lad! He will take after his heroic father. Like father like son!”

“May God grant it,” cried some of the Lipova men.

“And now we will moisten our dry throats,” cried the serdar.

“There is no need! Not on our account, pray!” was the cry on all sides.

“But we shall, though. . . Dunja, bring the jug and the gusla, do you hear?”

All were now silent.

The girl brought a jug and a glass; little Milan took the gusla in his arms. The girl stood aloof in a shy and shamefaced manner. She would not venture among so many men, and wished to hand the jug with the brandy over to a female relative who stood closest to her.

But the young men shouted: “Either you alone shall serve us, or nobody shall do it.”

And the serdar cried sternly:

“ Serve us, my child !”

In order to give her time to gain her composure, they took little Ivan amongst them, and fondled him and asked him questions. Dunja, red as a rose, now went from one to the other, handing the jug first to those older in years and pedigree. Each one drank the serdar's health, and each one's eyes strayed towards the beautiful girl as he did so.

When the young Latin boy's turn came . . . (I know you will not credit it) . . . all were silent, he alone raised his voice and cried aloud :

“ And even though it were poison, I would drink it from your hand !”

All stood mute with amazement. Who was it dared to say such a thing in the presence of her father? The bashful little Latin boy! However could such a daring notion have entered his mind? Heaven alone knew. Certain it was that these words had passed his lips merely by the way. He, however, seemed to have observed nothing; he emptied his glass and was about to hand it back to the girl, but she had escaped. It was in vain that the serdar called her back. She had already vanished in the house.

Not until then did the Latin boy look round about him in bewilderment.

“ You seem to look upon our Dunja with favour,” was the sullen remark of a relative who was the same age as Dunja.

The Latin boy felt as if someone had boxed his ears. He answered in the same tone: "And why should I not look upon her with favour?"

"Because she could thrust you into her girdle and then climb this hill at full speed; do you understand me!"

"She might do that with you, but not with me; do you understand me?" cried the Latin boy.

The people feared that the quarrel might take an ugly turn, and began to pacify the two. The serdar turned the whole thing into a joke. But there was one who cried: "Calm down, both of you. Such a buxom girl as that could overcome the two of you, if she wanted!"

"That she could not!" exclaimed the Latin boy, and stood up.

"We can easily make sure. We will call the girl in, and you shall match yourself against her, to see who is the stronger," cried the other.

Noise and laughter now arose.

"Stop now, you young scamps, we will now hear the serdar play on the gusla!" shouted the older men. But the younger ones were fairly bursting with laughter as they saw how haughtily the Latin boy bore himself. Some shouted: "Call Dunja here. . . Call Dunja! The serdar will allow it. Why should he not? That is no disgrace, God forbid. . . Will you, Luka? Say so and then you will see!"

He beckoned with his hand as a sign that they should keep quiet. Then he cried:

“ I will ! ”

When they saw that the serdar was laughing, full ten of them leaped into the house to fetch Dunja. She struggled, she waved her powerful arms, and pushed several of the men a couple of yards away from her. But the rascals fell upon her and at last managed to get her out.

“ Do not let me, father ! ” she exclaimed with a ringing laugh.

“ You must ! ” cried her father, also laughing. “ You must, and why not, since we desire it ? Bear yourself firmly, my darling. You are the daughter of Jovan Kněžević ! ”

The girl now grew serious, looked her father straight in the eyes, and then, rolling up her sleeves, she said :

“ Let him come, then ! ”

The young Latin boy now drew his weapons from his girdle, threw them to the ground with his cap, and ran up to the girl who was awaiting him on the free space in the threshing-floor.

They clutched each other by the arms.

She lifted him up in the air like a feather, but he stood alertly on his feet again.

“ Now you lift her up ! ” his kinsmen shouted to him.

“ Dunja, our champion ! ” shouted the Kněžević men to the girl.

This Luka would not do, but let her have the

mastery. Again the girl lifted him up to the right, then again to the left. But each time he regained his foothold as alertly as a roebuck.

"He is artful," cried some. "He is waiting till she is tired, and then he will begin!"

"On, on, Dunja!" cried all her kinsmen with one accord.

"Come, Luka, our champion. Do not disgrace us!" cried the Lipova men.

"Stop, Dunja!"

"Stop, Luka!"

"Stop, stop!"

He pressed her to him as hard as he could, with the intention of letting her go, or else to confuse her. But at the same moment she sprang alertly sideways, waved her arms and fell to the ground on top of him.

You can imagine what now took place. Such din and laughter arose, that not a word could be understood. The Lipova men made the best of a bad bargain and joined in the laughter. Dunja's relatives embraced and kissed one another. But the Latin boy, pale in the face, walked up to the assembly and eyed them narrowly in turn. The serdar was afraid that it might lead to something awkward, and so he took up the gusla and drew the bow once or twice across the strings. In an instant there was complete silence, for everybody understood what the old man's object was in so doing.

"You sit down with us as well, Luka! Do not be vexed, for it was only a joke!" spoke the serdar to him in a fatherly tone.

"I will obey you, serdar, but I only ask your leave for one word more."

"Good, what is it?" asked the serdar, giving him an encouraging glance.

"Brother!" began the Latin boy, "a girl has overcome me, has she not?"

"Truly!" exclaimed several through their teeth.

"But I tell you it was not so. Rather was it the girl's blood by which I was overcome. If anyone does not believe it, I am at his service!"

"Come, Luka, stop your foolish talk!" cried his kinsmen.

"I have said nothing evil. I only ask whether there is one among you who would venture to enter the lists with me now, although I have been overcome by a girl?"

"Stop, that is folly!"

"Whichever one of you Kněžević men pleases, and there are real heroes among you, I am sure."

"I accept the challenge," cried Kićun, angrily, "but from the knee upwards!"

"Have no fear, we shall strive together like men."

They seized one another.

Kićun was the strongest lad among the Grad-jani.

“Don’t break him in two, Kićun,” jeered the kinsmen of the latter.

And, by Heaven, Kićun did not spare the young Latin boy, he strained every muscle, in his endeavour to throw him to the ground. They swayed to and fro, they scuffled, until the Latin boy suddenly lifted Kićun up and threw him sideways to the ground.

“Was there no foul play about it?” asked the serdar, sternly.

“No, by God, serdar, what is true, is true. He has thrown me like a hero, and all honour to him!”

“If that is so, kiss him!”

“I will and gladly.”

“And you others will also?”

“Very gladly.”

“Listen to me, then. Whoever from this time onward calls this lad the little Latin boy will pay a fine of 50 florins, in addition I will lay about his back with this chibuk, as true as I live. But you, my dear boy, come to me.”

And embracing Luka, he said to him :

“Do you know that your father was my dearest friend?”

“I know it, and I am glad of it.”

“Do you know that among the townsfolk there was no better fellow than your father? And . . . and therefore”—he cleared his throat—“brother, even though it is against the Montenegrin custom,

you must not take it amiss if I now do . . . say something that was not known hitherto. . . Listen, Luka, will you have my Dunja for your wife?"

"Yes!" he exclaimed, beside himself with delight.

"Then send your uncle to me to-morrow with the betrothal ring."

"Good luck!" said all in agreement.

"Only you must not reproach me later with having forced her upon you. Do not quarrel with her and do not pit your strength against her as you have against Kićun!"

The Lipova men thereupon fired off their rifles in token of their joy. The whole neighbourhood hastened up; in a trice a great ring was formed and the kolo* began. The festivities came to an end only with the approach of night.

At the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, Dunja and Luka were wedded.

*Serbian dance.

PART II.
POETRY.

RUSSIAN :

KONSTANTIN DMITRIYEVITCH
BALMONT.

1. WATER.*

FROM droplets of dew that aquiver are throwing
The lustre of jewels around,
To the pallor of spaces, where, distantly flowing,
The wave of the ocean its foam-wreath is strowing
O'er seas that no plummet can sound,
Thou art everywhere, ever, life changelessly
 glowing,
Now emerald-tinted, now azurely showing,
Now in ruby and amber the waters abound,
In orange, white, green, and in dusky-blue
 splendour,
And in such as the deserts alone can engender,
In the swinging and singing of tides without
 bound,
Of tints only seen by the choicest of gazes,
As they tremble and sparkle and dazzle, their
 mazes

*The selections marked with an asterisk have already appeared
in "Modern Russian Poetry" by the same author.

No words can be culled to reflect :
 Though the word has its tints with unquenchable
 gleaming,
 Though the word that is comely with bloom ever
 teeming,
 A spring-tide of hues has bedecked.

The water has guises of infinite seeming
 In zones that are boundlessly deep ;
 Its multiple billows are cradled in dreaming,
 The spirit with muteness and tune of its stream-
 ing,
 It answers and lulls into sleep.

Rich of old have they been, and rich still are the
 spaces
 Where deserts stretch onward in azure-green
 traces,
 And islands have birth in their shoals.
 And Ocean, still Ocean, unfettered it ranges,
 But man ever sees how it changes and changes,
 And billowy visions unrolls.

Wherever I wander,
 Or hither, or yonder,
 I have harkened to lays of the storm,
 And I know how diversely I ponder.

.

And ever I mused, ever here, ever there,
 Upon Water so endlessly fair.

2.*

O WAVES of the ocean, akin to the blood in my
veins,

Ye ever unfettered are coursing to other domains,
Ye ever are lonely in chillness of ebb and of flow,
And,—alone or united,—we pine in uncomforted
woe.

Why may I not breathe and course on as a wave
of the sea?

On earth I am lonely, and cold is the spirit in me,
I likewise am speeding to other, to other
domains,—

O waves of the ocean, akin to the blood in my
veins!

3.* THE MAGIC WORLD.

STRAIT the passage, slender, long,
Reaching depths where visions throng,
Sinking down, you turn your eyes
Where an ice-wrought castle lies.

When from here you sink below,
Twinkling shafts of colour glow;
Someone's peeping eyes are seen—
Adamant and moonstone sheen.

There's the snowy opal; here
Budding emeralds appear.
Hearken—in these castles be
Flutes and lutes and dainty glee.

Whose may be the feet that don
 Crystal shoon you gaze upon?
 Ice in pillars, lustre, snow,
 Dainty, flaky, pearly glow.

Strait the passage, slender, long,
 Reaching realms where splendours throng;
 But to find the path you need,
 You must set your foot with heed.

VALERY YAKOVLEVITCH BRYUSOV.

1.* DUSK.

ELECTRICAL moons are twinkling
 On curving and delicate bands;
 The telegraph wires are tinkling
 In tender, invisible hands.

The clocks with their amber faces
 By magic are lit o'er the crowd;
 Of stillness the cooling traces
 The thirst-ridden pavement enshroud.

'Neath a net that quivers enchanted,
 The square lies hushed in the haze;
 The evening has smilingly planted
 A kiss on the harlot's gaze.

As music that soothingly quavers
Is daytime's far-away roar.
O dusk ! In your lulling favours
You steep my spirit once more.

2.* THE STONEHEWER.

—STONEHEWER, stonehewer, whitely arrayed,
What art thou building? For whom?

—Ho, do not baulk us intent on our trade,—
From our building a prison will loom.

—Stonehewer, stonehewer, trowel in hand,
Who then will sob in these walls?

—Not you, nor your brother, rich man, under-
stand,

For theft to your lot never falls.

—Stonehewer, stonehewer, who without sleep
Will abide there long hours of the night?

—Maybe my son will,—he toils for his keep.
And such is the close of our plight.

—Stonehewer, stonehewer, then will he think
Of them who laid bricks here of yore !

—Ho, beware ! Beneath ladders from jests you
should shrink . . .

This we ourselves know, give o'er !

3. TO THE POET.

THOU haughty must be as a banner ;
Thou tempered must be as a blade ;
Thy face must in heaven-like manner
As Dante's, with flame be arrayed.

Of all thou shalt witness be, coldly,
While fathoming all with thy gaze.
And this shall thy virtue be : boldly
To tread where the pyre is ablaze.

Perchance that all life was created
For shaping of resonant airs ;
Then seek thou how words may be mated,
From childhood that knows not of cares.

In moments of love-warm caresses
All passion within thee constrain ;
And 'mid the rack's ruthless distresses
Belaud thou the raptures of pain.

Track, dreaming what Fate thee presages
At morn or in evening's deep hour ;
And mark, how the poets through ages
Took garlands of thorns as their dower.

SERGEY GORODETSKY.

POLAND.

O SISTER mine, unknown to me,
Whom yet I loved since long ago !
Westward from Poland's pyre I see
A kindred flame is set aglow.

The world is lit by Slavdom's pyre,
Which scarce enkindled, blinds the sight.
'Mid Slavdom's calm a festive fire
Of coming strength flings out its light.

Where it bursts forth,—the Pole is there ;
The Russian,—where in depths it strays ;
But by one lightning-flash they bear
Into the gloom an age-long blaze.

Thou, Poland, Slavdom's arrow art ;
I see the bow-string tensely spanned ;
Quiver, where dearth has ne'er a part,
And wrath of God's extended hand.

Poland, to thee I am akin !
The fire of headstrong dreams, the trust
In fiery destiny shall win
Its all,—or sink amid the dust !

VYACHESLAV IVANOV.

THE MAENAD.

WILDLY sped the Maenad onward,
Like a doe,
Like a doe,—

With heart bursting from her bosom,
Like a doe,
Like a doe,—

With heart quailing like a falcon,
Prison-pent,
Prison-pent,—

With heart baleful like the sun at
Morn's ascent,
Morn's ascent,—

With heart like the evening sun, a
Sacrament,
Sacrament . . .

Thus when thou the godhead meetest,
Heart, shalt grow . . .
Heart, shalt grow . . .

And on the final threshold greetest,
Heart, shalt grow . . .
Heart, shalt grow . . .

From the peace-cup, O oblation,
Quaff content,
Quaff content,

Wine with mute conciliation
Blends content . . .
Blends content . . .

ZINAÏDA NIKOLAYEVNA HIPPIUS.

*ELECTRICITY.

Two threads are closely hafted,
The ends are unconfined.
'Tis "yea" and "nay,"—not grafted,
Not grafted,—but entwined.
Dim is the web that mates them
Close and inanimate,
But wakening awaits them,
And they the same await,
End unto end is taken,—
Fresh "yea" and "nay" ignite,
And "yea" and "nay" awaken,
Into one moulding shaken,
And from their death comes,—Light.

DMITRI SERGEYEVITCH
MEREZHKOVSKY.

*NIRVANA.

As in the day of first creation,
The azure skies are calm again,
As though the world knew not privation,
As though the heart knew naught of pain;
For love and fame my craving passes;

200 NIKOLAI MAXIMOVITCH MINSKY

'Mid silence of the fields at morn
I breathe, as breathe these very grasses . . .
O'er days ago, and days unborn
I would not chafe, nor reckoning squander.
This only do I feel once more :
What gladness—ne'er again to ponder,
What bliss—to know all yearning o'er.

NIKOLAI MAXIMOVITCH MINSKY.

*THE CITY AFAR.

Down yonder, 'mid hills in a shimmering bend
Lo, the city afar.
Pale village and woodland before it extend,
Where tintings of meadow and pasturage blend,
The city gleams faintly afar.
Nor dwelling, nor yard—but in shadows of night,
Something glides through the mist.
As if listless o'er many a soul in its plight,
As if weary o'er many a vision of might,
O'er the city lies dimly the mist.
Live vapours of toiling and passionate cries
Weave a darkening pall.
Dust and smoke and the specks and the shadows
that rise,
And numberless hearts with their throbbings and
sighs,
Aloft weave a darkening pall.

'Twixt the din of the city's unrest and my gaze
It is spread evermore.
And its load nor the morn nor the noon can
upraise,
Gaols, churches and courtyards, meseems, are
but haze,—
In the farness they merge evermore.

But sometimes at sunset an arrowy ray
Stabs the mist for a flash.
And amid the night's darkness, then fading away,
The city afar with its dreams of dismay
Is revealed to the gaze for a flash.

FYODOR KUZMITCH SOLOGUB.

1. *

EVIL dragon, 'mid the zenith hotly burning,
Thou, who all about thee, fiery threads art turning,
With a stifling hotness parching all the valley,—
Evil dragon, lo, too speedy is thy rapture
O'er thy victory; for, compassing thy capture,
From my dark, deep quiver, poisoned barbs will
sally.

With my bow before thee shall I stand, nor falter,
Dauntless to fulfil the doom that none can alter;
Vengeance unforeseen, and yet foretold I cherish.

Taut, my bow shall fling its shaft with brazen
droning.

To my challenge, thou shalt answer sorely
moaning,—

Foul destroyer, thou shalt wane away and perish.

2.* NORTHERN TRIOLETS.

(i.)

THOU earth with guile and irksome woe,
Art yet a mother unto me!

Mute mother mine, I love thee so,
Thou earth with guile and irksome woe!

How sweet in earth's embrace to be,
Nestling to her when May's aglow!

Thou earth with guile and irksome woe,
Art yet a mother unto me!

(ii.)

THE earth, the earth, ye men, revere,
Green secrets of its moistened weeds;

Its secret ordinance I hear:

—The earth, the earth, ye men, revere,
E'en its delights where venom breeds!—

Earthy, untaught, I hold it dear.

The earth, the earth, ye men, revere,
Green secrets of its moistened weeds.

(iii.)

WHAT delight,—from place to place
With uncovered feet to fare
And a scanty scrip to bear!
What delight,—from place to place
With austere and humble grace
To entwine a tuneful air!
What delight,—from place to place
With uncovered feet to fare.

UKRAINIAN :

TARAS SHEVTCHENKO.

1. DROWSY THE WAVES.

DROWSY the waves and dim the sky,
Across the shore and far away,
Like drunken things the rushes sway
Without a wind. O God on high,
Is it decreed that longer yet
Within this lockless prison set,
Beside this sea that profits naught,
I am to languish? Answering not,
Like to a living thing, the grain
Sways mute and yellowing on the plain;
No tidings will it let me hear,
And none besides to give me ear.
(1848.)

2. SEE FIRES ABLAZE.

SEE fires ablaze, hear music sound,—
The music weeps and nestles round.
E'en as a diamond, precious, fair,
The eyes of youth are bright, how bright!

IF, LORDLINGS, YE COULD ONLY KNOW 205

Gladness and hope have set their light
In joyous eyes. They know not care,
Those youthful eyes,—no sin is there.
And all are filled with mirth and glee,
And all are dancing. I alone
Gaze, as there were a curse on me.
I weep, I weep to all unknown.
Why do I weep? Perchance to mourn,
How without hap, as tempest-borne,
The days of all my youth have flown.
(1850.)

3. IF, LORDLINGS, YE COULD ONLY KNOW . . .

IF, lordlings, ye could only know
How living creatures weep for woe,
Ye would not pen idyllic lays,
Nor unto God give empty praise,
While mocking at the tears we shed.
Yon cottage with the forest nigh
We call a paradise : yet why?
There once my heart with torment bled,
And it was there my tears I shed,
Earliest tears ! Can e'er befall
At God's decree, a cruel teen
Which in that cottage ne'er was seen?—
And that a paradise they call !

No paradise in sooth, for me
That cottage by the grove can be,
By the clear pond, the village near,
My mother swaddled me, and here
She sang to me those lullabies
That made her own despair arise
Within her babe; that grove, that cot,
That paradise,—it was the spot
Where I saw hell. 'Twas bondage there,
Most grievous slavery, and ne'er
Would they vouchsafe me e'en to pray.
Ere long my own good mother lay
In very youth beneath the ground :
Rest from her grief and toil she found.
My father with his children wept
(We little ones but scantily clad)
And bearing not the griefs he had,
He died in servitude ; we crept
Away by strangers to be kept,
Like tiny beasts. At school oppressed,
I drew the water for the rest ;
My brothers toiled as serfs, till they
With hair close-shorn were marched away.

But sisters ! sisters ! Hapless ye,
Young fledglings mine ! What boots it you
Upon the earth your life to spend ?
Hirelings in stranger's keep ye grew,—
Your hireling tresses shall grow white,
Hirelings, O sisters, ye will end. . . .
(1850.)

4. LEGACY.

WHEN I'm dead, then let me slumber
Underneath a mound,
'Mid the rolling steppe, with precious
Ukraine earth around ;
That the mighty girth of acres,
Dnieper's craggy shores,
I may gaze on, and may hearken
How the blusterer roars.

When it bears away from Ukraine
To the azure sea
Foemen's blood,—then I'll depart from
Mountain-side and lea :
These unheeding, I'll be speeding
Even unto God,
There to pray, but till that happen,
I'll know naught of God.

Grant me burial, then uprising,
Shatter every gyve ;
Drench with evil blood of foeman
Freedom, that it thrive.
And my name in your great kindred,
Kindred free and new,
Ye shall cherish, lest it perish,—
Speak me fair and true,

(1845.)

POLISH :

ADAM ASNYK.

1. WITHOUT LIMITS.

THE streams have their sources,
The oceans have their courses,
Where their billows roll.
The mountains in heaven lowering
Have yet an end to their towering :
Fixed is their goal.

But the heart, the heart of mankind,
Ne'er an end in its flight can find.
Through tears, longing and pain.
Weening within its clasp
Space and eternity to grasp
And heaven to contain.

2. THE TORRENT.

ON Tatra's peaks, on Tatra's peaks,
Upon their bluish tips,
The wind 'mid mists is king,—he shrieks
And murky clouds he whips.

From mist a woof of rain is made,
Dew from the clouds unbound,
And streams their dripping jaws have laid
Upon the crags around.

Where mountains loom, 'mid forest-gloom,
In bluish veils 'tis swathed.
In tears of rain amid the plain
The granite piles are bathed.

And naught is seen, the azure's bed,
And all the firmament,
In shadow sleep, with mist o'erspread,
With sheets of rain-storm rent.
And day and night and dawn once more
Unchanging will draw nigh,
To swelling waters as they roar,
To leaden streaks of sky.

The rain-storms lash, the tempest shrieks,
The flood in wrath rings clearer.
On Tatra's peaks, on Tatra's peaks
The torrent thunders nearer.

JAN KASPROWICZ.

1

THE wind whips the orphaned pines
And rain at my window beats;
In peaceful mood my soul
To misty pathways fleets.

It flows to the flame-lit crags,
To the chasm-crowning ways,
Where the sight of the secrets of God
Is before us in tumult ablaze.

It speeds to the eddies of light
That coil from the sun's gold beams,
Where by the shoreless spaces
Yearning in solitude dreams.

The wind whips the orphaned pines,
Mists in the rain unroll.
Ho, mountains, enchanted mountains,
The yearning of my soul.

2.

WHAT is life worth without ecstasy's hours,
Void of those frenzies that men in their cold-
ness.

Christen transgression and overboldness?
Such life is as autumn-tide sodden with showers.

There is no sunlight, that shimmers and glows,
There is no blossom, that fragrances spreads,
Only a wind o'er the desolate beds,
In a piercing monotony blows.

But life is like unto spring-tide, when love
And suffering both in its ken it enfolds,
When it plucks at the stars in the azure above.
Glitter and warmth and fragrant smells
Are the bounteous guerdons that this life
holds—

All things, whose fountain from raptures of God
upwells.

MARYA KONOPNICKA.

1. NOW WHEN THE KING . . .

Now when the king went forth to arms,
Trumpets played him shrill alarms;
Trumpets played with golden throats,
Triumph, gladness in their notes.

But when Tom went out to battle,
Clear-eyed springs began to prattle;
Murmured, too, the fields of grain
Words of anguish, words of pain.

Bullets hiss amid the fight,
And the folk like sheaves are mown;
While the kings most stoutly fight,
Peasants heap on heap are thrown.

Loud eagles round the banner fly,
Where the village crosses swing.
Tom is wounded,—left to die,
But unscathed returns the king.

And when through gleaming gates he rode,
Golden dawning yonder glowed;
Bells set chiming far and wide
On the sunny country-side.

And when the peasant's pit was made,
Rustled trees in distant glade,
Chimes came through the oak-grove stealing
Of blue-bells and of lilies pealing.

2. FRAGMENT.

I COME not, nightingales, to join your lay,
Nor, rose, with thee, to blossom by the way,
Whereon there vanish thousands with their woe,
 Borne on for ever by a gale.
Nor to arise, O sun, amid thy glow,
That sheds in equal measure peace and light,
If souls grow warm or perish in the fight,—
 But, O mankind, with thee to wail !

LUCYAN RYDEL.

1. CENTAUR AND WOMAN.

THE starlight wanes; with gentle warmth
 bedight,
The plain afar is smooth and endless shed
To where,—like to a stream of fiery red—
'Neath greenish skies a blood-hued streak gleams
 bright.

Calm. . . On the dew, hoofs' sudden, thunderous
 flight;
A shrill lament, that echoless has fled,
A horse's back, white arms in mist outspread,
And in the wind, a flood of tresses light.

O'er the fair head and body white as snow,
Whose girth a pair of swarthy arms enlace,
Another head, dark, bearded, is bent low.

A centaur, who a woman in embrace
Naked and swooning, bears at frenzied pace.
In mist they pass. . . The din fades . . Earth's
 aglow.

2. THE SYRENS.

OCEAN, green ocean in its endless maze :
The milky moon above in azure skies ;
From far away the gleaming waves arise
Snowy with foam, with lightning sparks ablaze.

From the black rocks ascend the syrens' lays.
They rest and view the moon with tearful eyes ;
From hair and maiden-breasts the water flies,
With scales their hips are bright as rainbow-rays.

They sing ; their song soars upward, wanes,
 grows dim,
Like to their bodies, strange, rare, full of woes,
Born in a coral-wood 'neath ocean's brim.

Suddenly, pointing past the crag, one rose :
A sail upon the sea's dull, silvery rim ;
They sing. The sail flows,—straight to the rock
 it flows.

3. ARISE, O SONG !

ARISE, O song, arise from quivering strings,
Rise and resound
Through golden light that radiant evening flings
And through the rainbow, proudly sweeping
round,
Flow in the blue recesses of the skies,
Resound and rise.

Somewhere away beneath thee, lies far down
Midst lime and birch,
In orchards green, the tiny peaceful town,
And twittering birds that in the thickets perch,
And smoke, that driven by the wind is flying
From roofs low-lying.

Beneath thee lie the fields of fruitful grain,
The bands of streams,
The sapphire coloured surface of the main,
The snow of summits, that like silver gleams,
In clouds the drowsy thunder 'neath thee roaring
And eagles soaring.

O 'midst the dust of gleaming planets flow,
The spheres' wild rack,
'Midst dizzy whirling of their fiery glow
The scarlet chaos of their blood-red track,
Take flight, and by the opal radiance drowned
Rise and resound.

LEOPOLD STAFF.

1. THE STRANGE SHRINE.

AMID the pangs of toil, the throes of tensest
night,
Racked by a savage fire, with brow distraught,
I fain
Had welded in one mass, with more than mortal
strain,
The shapes, hues, rhythms of my every sleepless
night.

A church I built aloft, whose like none ever
viewed,
Mastering direst force of mightiness! I raised
Therein a cyclop-statue, that my chisel's crazed
Zeal out of breakage left from giant clods had
hewed.

Upon the walls I wrote the annals of my dreams. .
In strangest colour-orgies there my torment
gleams,
And all my dark-voiced anthems from the organ
flow.

Who enters there, these secret wonders shall not
know,—
And I, what they betoken, unto none can teach,
For I, who wrought, can fathom not my own
soul's speech.

2. THE GOBLET OF MY HEART.

O, in how anxious wise my peaceful heart I bear,
O, with what boundless dread I bear it on
through life!

I shun the road whereon fierce battle has its lair,
I shun the sloping path, where jeopardy is rife.

But for such care as this I gave it soothing calm,
And for its sake I gazed a shelter from such care,
A haven from all torment, silence, peaceful balm.
O, in how anxious wise my peaceful heart I bear.

How anxiously I bear my goblet, crystal wrought,
With it how fearfully my peaceful way I go,
Far from carouses, where in burning pangs dis-
traught,

Revellers pledge a health from cups that overflow,
Sadness has gnawed therein a rent for evermore,
But for such care I slowly, patiently have brought
The wine of tears, my heart's-blood, which
therein I pour. . .

How anxiously I bear my goblet crystal-wrought!

LUDWIK SZCZEPAŃSKI.

1. THE ARTIST TO THE WOMAN.

THOU art my harp! Beneath the spell I shed
Thou dost intone an anthem golden-strained,
And thou art all in harmony contained,
Of song the living spring and fountain-head.

I rule o'er thee! My heart is moved, and I
Unto thy beauty deathlessness bestow,
That noble spirits on their knees sink low,
Humbly ecstatic as thou soar'st on high.

Demon or angel thou art unto me,—
This know : a lotus-flower or frenzy's fount,
Where I in thirst and potent yearning turn.

O thou, my ruler and my slave!—with thee
Unto the shrine of the ideal I mount,
That thou may'st live, my heart thereon I burn.

2. WEARINESS.

AH, 'mid the fields
 Of pallid green
Wields
 Crystalline night her sheen.
An ocean white
 Quivers in space.
Bright
 Mists waft round my resting-place.
Misty chains
 Softly entwine
Strains &
 Of silvery harps that fade and pine.
Life's imaged wreath
 Is blurred in dream
'Neath
 Nirvana's dome with stainless gleam.

Ah, with this haze

Showered pearly tears their chimings
merge.

Glaze

Steeps me adream, now I have gained the
verge. . .

KAZIMIERZ PRZERWA-TETMAJER.

1. SONG OF THE NIGHT MISTS.

SOFTLY, softly, let us wake not streams that in the
valley sleep,

Let us with the wind dance gently o'er the spaces
wide and deep.

Let us like a mighty garland round the moon
ourselves entwine,

That our bodies, filled with radiance, in a rain-
bow-hue may shine.

Let us quaff the roar of torrents that are merged
into the lake,

And the gentle noise of firs and of the pine-trees
in the brake.

Balmy scent of blossoms blooming on the moun-
tains let us drink ;

Filled with music, fragrance, colour, let us rise
to heaven's brink.

Softly, softly, let us wake not streams that in the
valley sleep,

Let us with the wind dance gently o'er the
spaces wide and deep.

Lo, a star falls!—Let us fly and hold it fast in
our embrace,

Let us fly to greet it, ere 'tis shattered, leaving
not a trace.

With the milky down, the filmy coat of darkness
let us play,

With the plumage of the night-owls wheeling
upwards and away.

Let us speed to catch the flitter-mouse, so softly
flying past,

E'en as we, and in our tiny meshes let us hold
him fast.

Let us flit from peak to peak, like to gently
swaying bridges.

By the shafts of starlight fastened to the corners
of the ridges.

And upon them rests the wind that for a moment
bates its soaring,

Ere afresh it rends us down and drives us
onward, dancing, roaring!

2. ON THE LONELY ROAD.

ON my spirit's chords thy fingers

Thou, O tempest, lay.

The dream that 'mid deep water lingers,

'Mid bright dawning, play.

Play the strains from pasture streaming,

From the drowsy pines;

Play what in misty chasm dreaming

Round the rainbow twines.

What most calm, most hid, is vanished
 To some secret lair,
 Tempest, what is farthest banished,
 To my spirit bear.

3. CZARDAS (A FRAGMENT).

HAIL, O gypsy fiddler, hail!
 A czardas is my pleasure!
 'Cello, groan, and fiddle, wail
 In wild exultant measure.
 All the grief my soul doth sway,
 All the woes and ills
 All into thy fiddling lay
 Ho! a czardas to me play,
 Gypsy from the hills.
 All the grief my soul doth sway,
 Proudly laid to rest
 All into thy fiddling lay
 Ho! a czardas to me play,
 With wild exultant zest.
 Mountain blood flows in our veins,
 Both our souls are dire;
 Quell my anger with thy strains,
 All my scorn and ire.
 Hearken to the forest cry,—
 From afar it rings;
 Play e'en as the forest plays
 When the tempest thro' it strays;
 From the bow let fibres fly,
 Tears flow from the strings.

Ho ! ne'er let me meet my doom
Down within the lea ;
Nor may I find on earth a tomb,
Death's laughing-stock to be.
On the granite I would find
Rest, where rocks are still ;
Cradled by the weeping wind
I would sleep my fill.
May the gloomy pine-trees sigh,
Verdant branches swaying ;
Clouds in clusters hover nigh,
A rainbow crown displaying.
There the mighty eagles soar
Loudly onwards sweeping ;
From the granite gates there pour
Mighty waters weeping.

CZECH :

PETR BEZRUCĚ.

1. THE PITMAN.

I DIG, under the earth I dig ;
Boulders glittering like the scales of a serpent I
dig ;
Beneath Polská Ostrava I dig.

My lamp is quenched, upon my brow has fallen
My hair, matted and clammy with sweat ;
My eyes are shot with bitterness and gall ;
My veins and my skull are clouded with vapour ;
From beneath my nails gushes forth crimson
blood ;
Beneath Polská Ostrava I dig.

The broad hammer I smite upon the pit ;
At Salmovec I dig,
At Rychvald I dig, and at Petřvald I dig.

Hard by Godula my wife freezes and whimpers,
Famishing children weep at her bosom ;
I dig, under the earth I dig.

Sparks flash from the pit, sparks flash from my
eyes ;
At Dombrová I dig, at Orlová I dig,
At Poremba I dig and beneath Lazy I dig.

Above me overhead rings the clatter of hoofs,
The count is riding through the hamlet, the count-
tess with dainty hand
Urges on the horses and her rosebud face is
smiling.

I dig, the mattock I upraise ;
My wife, livid-faced, trudges to the castle,
Craving for bread, when the milk has dried up in
her breasts.

Good-hearted is my lord,
Of yellow masonry is his castle,
Beneath the castle is dinning and bursting the
Ostravice.

By the gates two black bitches are scowling.

Wherefore she went to the castle to pester and
beg?

Grows rye on my lord's field for the drab of a
pitman?

At Hrušov I dig and at Michalkovice.

What will betide my sons, what will betide my
daughters,

On the day when they drag out my corpse from
the pit?

My sons shall go on digging and digging,
At Karvinna digging ;

And my daughters,—how fares it with daughters
of pitmen?

How if one day I should fling my accursed lamp
 into the pit,
And stiffen my bended neck,
Clench my left hand and stride forth and onward,
And in a sweeping curve from the earth to the
 skyline upwards
Should upraise my hammer and my flashing
 eyes,
Yonder beneath God's sunshine!

2. THE HIDEOUS SPECTRE.

UGH. . . 'tis a hideous phantom!
So say the justices of the golden city,
So says the sage leader of the people,
Patriot ladies shake their dainty heads,
So says Rothschild and Gutman, Count Laryš
 and Vlček,
And his Lordship Marquis Géro,—
When from the throng of the seventy thousand
I rose up aloft. So did they smite me with a
 whip!
Like to the Vitkovice furnaces blazed my single
 eye,
A bloodstained gown fluttered from my
 shoulders,
Upon one I bore the German school,
Upon the other I bore the Polish church,
In my right hand the heavy hammer I bore
(My left was struck off by a boulder of coal,
My eye was scorched out by the blaze of a flame)

And in my heart were the curses and hatred of
seventy thousand.

God knows, I am hideous!

From me the stench of a corpse is wafted,
Upon hand, upon foot, my flesh is bursting;
Knowest thou the forges at Baška? So my eye
blazes,

A bloodstained gown flutters from my shoulders,
In my right hand the pitman's hammer I bear,
My left was struck off by a boulder of coal,
My eye was scorched out by the blaze of a flame—
Upon my back squat a hundred murderers from
Modrá

(Like savage rats they gnaw into my neck)

Upon my hips squat a hundred Jews from
Polská,—*

Jeer ye, my God, jeer ye! Such my array,
I, Petr Bezruč, Bezruč of Těšín,
Bard of an enslaved nation.

Why are the youth of Vltava† becomes as a
captive flittermouse?

Did not the Romans upraise Spartacus as leader.
So shall I stand,—long since have perished my
nation,—

A hundred years shall I stand with my brow
upraised to the skyline,

With my smitten neck shall I touch the azure,
I, Petr Bezruč, Ahasuerus of the Czech con-
science,

Hideous phantom and bard of a bygone nation.

*Galicia. †The Moldau, on which Prague is situated.

3. VRBICE.

BENEATH Bohumín, where the speech of my
 grandsires has ceased to resound,
And amid Hrušov, where smoke issues from a red
 factory,
My lord's factory, where we breathe hard and
 hardly,
Thou liest, my hamlet, with the wooden chapel.
Decayed are the huts, upon whose roofs the moss
 grows rankly ;
Four poplars show Christ on the cross.
Thus
They thrust a crown of thorns on my brow at
 Bohumín,
Nailed my hands at Ostrava, at Těšín they
 pierced through my heart,
At Lipiny they gave me vinegar to drink,
By Lysá they pierced my feet with a nail.
One day, ah, one day, thou wilt come unto me,
Thou maiden with dusky and lustreless eyes,
Who bearest a poppy in thy hands.
Still shall the whip resound, still shall they
 hound us down
Beneath Bohumín and at Hrušov, at Lutyň, at
 Baška,
No more do I hear, what shall befall me there-
 after,
What shall befall me when all has an end.

4. I.

I AM the seer of the folk by the Bezkyds;
God gave me not to them. He heeds but the
country
Where gold of the corn stretches up to the sky-
line,
Where pansies are fragrant, forget-me-nots
blossom,
Where cymbal and fiddle make music for dances,
Where cities are broad and castles majestic,
Treasure-filled churches and skiffs on the river,
Trusting in heaven, and gladness and glee.

He whom God had condemned to a sulphury
chasm,
He whose lips in their starkness no prayer ever
uttered,
Sat on a crag with a time-old defiance.

He stared with an eye that was murky as night-
fall,
'Neath the hush of the Bezkyds and 'neath Lysá
Hora.

A century's grip, the yoke that has humbled
The collier's neck as a bough in the bending,
Turbulent grasp of the foreigner, dragging

The vanishing speech from the lips of the
 children,
The sign of betrayal, of hands in entreaty,
—For a hundred years' span his gaze it had
 haunted—
Stirred up a demon.

He smote at the boulder.
Down from the crag leapt the hideous prophet,
Nurtured from serfdom, from blood of betrayal;
He sobbed at the moon and he railed at the sun-
 shine,
With a clench of his fist he threatened the
 heavens,
And each of the slayers, though golden their
 lustre,
And though at their feet were bowed down as to
 godheads
Yonder at Těšín the colliery bondsmen.
He clutched at the dust in his wrath and defiance,
The bounty for life that the demon had given
 him,—
Down from the crag leapt I!

(ii.)

IN August, when sunrays are ruddy and slanting,
When spurtings of heat ooze out from the
 boulders,
The Morávka torrent is parched in its courses,

Below are uplifted the arms of the miners,
The blacksmiths are pounding the iron in its red-
ness,

On the fields that stretch onwards at Krásná, at
Pražma,

Women bow down in the glow of the sunshine.
I roused myself up from this peaceable people,
Even whose cradle was guarded by serfdom,
Even whose childhood was fettered by bondage,
Ill-plighted scion of miners and blacksmiths ;
I sped me from Ostrava, Witkowitz, Baška,
From Frydlant, from Orlová, Dombrová, Lazy,
I flung in the pit my hammer and mattock,
I left in the field my mother and sister,
I snatched from its hook my grandfather's fiddle,
My tune I began.

Once, haply, resounded
Strains of delight from it, youth and affection.
Three strings were rended.

I flung from the church the foreigner's preacher,
From the foreigner's school I beat out the master ;
By night I enkindled my woods they had taken ;
The hare I entrapped in my overlord's coppice.
They dragged me to Těšín, God tangled my senses.
'Neath Lysá I play to the goats and the squirrels,
Beneath the red ash-tree to sparrows that perch
there.

From hamlet to hamlet in heat I have wandered,

In heat and in cold, 'mid snow and 'mid rainfall.
I have played behind hedges and played beneath
 windows;

Only a single string has my fiddle,
The heavy sigh of the seventy thousand,
That have perished 'neath Lysá, hard by Bohu-
 mín;

They have perished amid their wrenched-away
 pinewoods,

In the wrenched-away Bezkyds slowly they
 perish,

They in Šumbark have perished, in Lutyň have
 perished,

In Datyne perish, in Dětmarovice,
They in Poremba perished, they in Dombrová
 perish.

A stirring has come o'er the seventy thousand;
Long ago on the Olza was pitched an encampment,
Far have we yielded beyond the Lucyna,
Crossing to Morava, beyond the Ostravice,
A nation of silence, a stock that is gone.

As David in front of the ark, so before them
Like a mad snake to the sound of the reed-pipe,
Doth dance the quaint bard of the seventy
 thousand,

The Bezkyd Don Quixote, with juniper spear-
 shaft,

Armour of moss and a helmet of pine-cones,

A mushroom for shield, and he peeps from the
spinney,
Eager to seize on the stern arm of judgment,
The knight's tawny sword in the golden-wrought
corselet.

I, Petr Bezruč, the Bezruč of Těšín,
Vagabond fiddler and piper of madness,
Lunatic rebel, and mettlesome songster,
Ill-omened owl on the turret of Těšín,
I play and I sing, while the hammers make
thunder
From Witkowitz, Frydlant, and under Lipiny.
Around are rich men of a faith that I know not,
(O Petr Bezruč, how lovest thou them !)
Men who have names that are lordly and peerless,
Haughty as stars and lustrous as godheads ;
(O Petr Bezruč, who shattered your home?)
Around there are women in velvet, in satin ;
Around there are men, glorified, mighty,
In the city of gold, by the side of the Danube,
Around there are poets, from Vltava's margins,
The lovers of women, as Paris has bidden.
The string in despair 'neath the bow is aquiver,
The heavy sigh of the seventy thousand ;
I sing to the stones and I play to the boulders,
I play and I sing,—will ye give me a kreutzer?

OTAKAR BŘEZINA.

1. A MOOD.

FAINT with the heat, a murmur on the calm
 branches falls,
Motionless hanging, while in grievous intervals
The forest breathed, oppressed; sap in a bitter
 tide
From the burst herbage let crude-savoured
 fragrance glide.
'Neath the unmoving trees pale faintness sought
 a place,
Sat by my side and breathed forebodings in my
 face,
Grief of the ceaseless question in my eyes
 immersed,
And with my soul in speech of lifeless words
 conversed.
The sun's o'erripened bloom quivered in glows of
 white,
Quailed in the dusk of boughs and 'mid blue
 leaves took flight
With listless calm's mute wane of strength; in
 mosses hid
It smouldered, lulling me in weariness amid
A bath of mystic breath, as though 'neath waves I
 lay,
And from my opened veins blood softly oozed
 away.

“ *The Mystic Distances* ” (1897)

2. ROUNDELAY OF HEARTS.

EVER with equal
 Raising and sinking of pinions
 In postures higher and higher
 Repeated
 Above the burden of earth
 Prevails the glory of soaring.
 Spirit voices are chanting the paths of grace,
 Like birds encircling their whilom nests,
 In magical gardens of enchantments,
 O mystical husbandman !

Hear ye the secret seething of blood? Simmer of
 ripening ferment
 Dazing the senses? Feverish chiming in dark-
 ness of hives?
 Grievous music of hearts, attuned by the ages like
 strings
 For starry harmony?
 Wailing of strings too tensely wound, rended
 apart?
 And scouring all worlds, the fiery cadence,
 Compassing seraphic harmony?
 Baffling remembrance of myriads in glorious
 embrace,
 Ere this visible cosmos blossomed with heavy
 splendour
 Amid infinities?

Signals of return, awaited by all beings of earth,
Mustering the brotherhood of huntsmen
In mocking labyrinths deep in the forest of
dreams?

In the grief of multitudes over blood-stained
fields,
In the anguished blenching of usurpers,
In the secret victories of woman,
Like flames on a thousand-armed lustre,
At every opening of doors, by which the awaited
approach,
In a gust of spirit-music
Hearts are aquiver.

Hail to you arrivals!
Vintages of our most potent grapes
Mark the path for you!
Black, charred traces of our fires,
Where we have sat beneath the sparkling of
heavenly lights,
In silence of night, singing of your advent;
Hallowed tokens,
Which in the language of nations destined to
perish
We have graven on vertical scutcheons of rock,
Ruined arches of triumphal gates
Of our rulers,
Temple-obelisks hidden beneath
Deposit of ages.—

Because of the secret of grief, of death, and of
 new birth
 Blissful is life !

Because of the invisible presence of the great and
 holy among our kin
 Who wander in our midst in gardens of light
 And from the farness of all ages converse with our
 souls
 Graciously,
 Blissful is life !

Because of the kingly gratitude of the vanquished,
 Who trustingly lays his head upon the bosom
 Where thy radiance sings more potently,
 Because of embrace of foes in enchantment of our
 loftiest season,
 Blissful is life !

Because of celestial fragrance of newly-unfolded
 blossoms
 In rapture of song, in glory of kisses,
 Blissful is life !

Because of sublime weariness of builders,
 Blissful is life !

Because of the starry spirit-gaze
 Begirding earth on all sides together ;
 Crystal solitudes of the poles, of earliest ages, of
 ancient mountains, of statute, of number ;
 Silent oceans of blossoming light, of happiness,
 harvests, and night-fall ;

Feverish tropical gardens of blood, of thirst, and
of princely dreamings;
The burden of all fruits ripened by suns visible
and invisible
And that clamour for tempests and culling;

Seething of bee-swarms before dispersing; con-
tests of nations through centuries;

Harmonious soaring of earth in the splendid
curve of its orbit, and in earthquakes;

Azure mirrors of heaven even above the isles of
them accursed by leprosy,

Chalk mountain-ranges where oceans once
thundered

And where once again they shall thunder,

Sparkling of insects in forests of grass,

Sparkling of worlds in infinities,

Sparkling of thought in spirit herbage of the
unknown.

Because of the delicate smiling of eyes undeceived
by the gigantic Hallucination,

Blissful is life!

Because of blood that gushes from age to age out
of the sinewy arms

Upraising the load of the past like hinges of
prison-portals!

Because of the sublime cause of the joy of
myriads!

Because of the secret price of the death of all
brethren who died for us

(And all who have been, through all centuries,
upon the whole expanse of earth

Have died for us)

Because of all crops, sown by a myriad hands and
yet ungarnered !

Because of the alluring gleam and perils of all
unvoyaged oceans !

Because of every span of earth that is destined as
the battle-field of our victories,

And is therefore secretly marked with blossoms
and gold !

Because of all beauty yet unkindled upon
countenances,

Unatoned guilt, stones unchanged into bread,

Wealth still unbestowed upon brethren, kisses
still waiting for lips,

Blissful is life !

Because of the outcry of the desolate heart

When it exults from its anguish like a straying
bird

That has found a singing multitude of brethren,

Blissful is life !

Because of gusts, cataclysms, tempests !

Paroxysms of love and desire !

Onslaughts of spirits !

Ceaseless ardour and thirst of uniting endeavour !

Because of our mystical sharing

In labour of all conquerors,

Who mark all happenings as a flock for the shear-
ing

With the branded token of their destiny,
Ruling over ardour and sorrow of myriads
And dispatching death to their fields as a gleaner
And to their quarries as a hewer of stone for their
building

(As a multitude in amazement gazing to a single
point

They leave the ages behind them ;
And kingdoms, like ships, upon which mariners
have leapt from the shore,

Sway beneath their poise even to capsizing)
Because of the mighty bliss of being mauled as a
billow

By the surge of a majestic ocean of brethren
And of spurting up in the crest of foam like a
sprig of white blossom

At the buffeting against cliffs of the promised
land.

Because of hidden spring-tides of harmony
Set in the woven fabric of all things
Like butterfly-wings of the opalescent azure at
evening,

Asparkle with the scaliness of stars,
Blissful is life !

Because of the approaching advent of the radiant
mortal of mystery,
Who alone among myriad brethren that shall be
and have been,
Conqueror over space,

Shall change the earth from pole to pole after thy
sacred will

And by thought that from submissive suns
Has learnt deftness and dances and tunes,
Shall sit in thy secret council
Among princes of the cosmos—
Blissful is life!

“ *The Hands* ” (1901).

3. THE HANDS.

IN dazzling whiteness of light lay the earth, like
a book of songs

Opened before our eyes. And thus did we sing :

Lo, in this moment the hands of myriads are
locked in a magical chain,

That all continents, forests, mountain-ranges,
begirds

And across silent realms of all oceans is out-
stretched unto brethren ;

In cities that loom darkly up from deep horizons,
tragical altars of sacrifice ;

And where the sun, mystical lamp, suspended low
from azure vaults,

Bloodily smoulders in smoke, circling over
stations and cathedrals,

Palaces of kings and armies, council-chambers,
prisons, amphitheatres,

And where the ardour of a myriad hearts in the
twilit heaven of spirits

Flares up enkindled, in feverish tempest of sweetness and death,
Grains of glowing coal, uprooted by implement of iron ;—
In frowning silences of hollows, in grievous forebodings of summer,
When torrents of spring-tide powers, quenched in the blossom, petrify as lava motionless,
Days, like toilers in secret foundries, creep onward in weariness,
And in drops of sweat sparkle man and beast, a brotherly coupling in the yoke
Under a single invisible lash, that scourges from sunrise to sunset ;
On waves of oceans and souls, where anguished behests of sailors, clutched by the whirlwind,
Rotate around the masts, outdinned by triumph of lightnings, when skies and waters
Are welded into a single element of horror and death ;—
At all forges, looms and presses, in quarries and subterranean shafts,
Upon building-sites of the Pharaohs, where nations lament in bondage
And raise up gigantic tombs above uncounted lords ;—
In the demoniac movement of wheels, pistons and levers and overhead whirring hammers ;—
On battle-fields, in observatories, academics, lazarets, laboratories ;—

In workshops of masters, pondering over marble,
 where slumbers
A mightier world of horror and glory and from
 the fabric of age-old drowsings
Half-illumined arises in the flash of chisels and
 the creative sparkle of eyes ;—
And yonder, where passion on volcanic steep of
 death lets blossom
Orange-gardens of yearning and wines and
 poisons the fieriest ripen
In the feverish never-setting sun ; and where lust,
Alchemist poisoned by vapours of his vain ferment,
Raves in hallucinations ;—in twilights of mystery
 and music,
Where pondering draws nigh to forbidden places
 and amid thunder of orchestras
In a dream of forfeited harmony metals lament
 and from the strings
Is wafted a torrent of songs like the earliest
 tempest of earth over weariness of souls ;—
Beneath electrifying gesture of maidens, where
 sparkle dazing spring-tides,
Night-time of destiny resounds in soaring of
 kisses, stars are as lips aglow
And woman, suddenly blenching at the outcry of
 her hidden name, in agonies
As upon stairs oozing with blood, descends to the
 enchanted wells of life,

Amid the wailing of ages hounded in a circle,
amid the envious seething of invisible
beings,
And with cry of horror starts back, livid, and
with grievous flaming of hands
Clasps her prey to her breasts : a life, lamenting
in contact with this sun ;
In the clashing of a thousand wills, shattered by
streams of thy mystical will,
Alone among all the myriads, man labours, count-
less hands are aquiver,
From age to age they are fixedly clutched, weary-
ing never
On both hemispheres of earth . . . In tragical
triumph of dreaming
Like hands of a child they toy with the stars as
with jewels
But on awakening they grow turgid and numb,
bloodstained with murder,
Livid with chillness of ages, and amid the soar-
ing of earth, staggering over abysses,
They cling in despair to its herbage. . . Frenzied
hands of a ruthless hunter
Tracking the elements down ! Curse-laden hands
of a half-naked slave
At the scarlet forges of toil ! In clasp of
entreaty, the hands of the vanquished
Fused like sand by the blow of lightning ! And
those cleansed with tears,
Glistening, overflowing with lustre, with the
bleeding stigmas of love

Branded for ever! Filled with magic and balm,
with a touch of the brow reading the
thoughts of brethren

Kingly, lavishing! Lulling into celestial solace!
Aetherized as light and unto the fruit of mystical
trees

Stretching forth with the whole universe into the
endless!—

And our hands, enfolded amid a magical chain
of countless hands,

Sway in the current of brotherly strength, which
laps upon them from afar,

Ever more potent from pressure of ages. Un-
broken waves

Of sorrow, daring, madness, bliss, enchantment
and love

Suffuse our bodies. And in the beat of their
tempest, with vanishing senses

We feel how our chain, seized by the hands of
higher beings,

Enfolds itself in a new chain unto all starry
spaces

And encompasses worlds.—And then in answer
to the grievous question,

Concealed in dread by centuries, as a secret of
birth

Which first-born dying reveal to first-born,

We heard the roundelay of waters, stars, and
hearts and amid its strophes,

At intervals melancholy cadences, dithyramb of
worlds following one upon the other.

“*The Hands*” (1901).

J. KARÁSEK ZE LVOVIC

1. THE DREAM.

Was it yesterday? Was it a hundred years since?
I know not, but very weary and infirm I was,
And my steps were the steps of a man who walks
in a dream.

And I went through darksome causeways
And vacant and empty they were, and in them the
wind moaned.

So grievously moaned . . .
And from a turret the hour chimed. . . And
meseemed,

That this voice summoned me into the
vault of a temple,
Where beneath heavy slabs with knightly
scutcheons

Slumber my ancestors . . .
Am I living or dead? I know not, but meseems,
That although these causeways are strange and
unknown to me,

I have wandered therein of old,—
Was it yesterday or a hundred years since?
In this or in that life?
I know not, but my gait is firm and unwavering
As the gait of a man who wanders a wonted path.

And I hear the creaking of door-posts,
And hands unseen are opening
Heavy portals of a gloomy palace.
And I tread the stair-way of black marble
And my steps call into the darkness
And dead spaces answer unto them—
And I stride so firmly through darkness of
 passages
And pace the emptiness of ancient halls,
 Ancestral halls,
At the sides of which I forebode pictures of grand-
 sires
And tatters of captured banners
And rusted weapons from old-time combats,
 Which savour of murder . . .
And I feel the mildew that bedecks all,
And the air, that the dead inhale.
And I see flickering in the darkness
Shadows of alarm and sorrowful crape.
And I feel how my heart is beating vehemently,
And my temples, how they are moistened with
 sweat
And anguish clutches me for what I have
 endured,
 And what long is no more.

“ *Conversations with Death* ” (1904).

2. BEETHOVEN. *Adagio, op. 27.*

O SORROW poignant, burdened and petrified,
O sorrow of statues, which display in temples
Their white and marble-wrought nakedness to
pilgrims,

Enter my spirit !

Enter my spirit, wearied with long living.
Rise amid fruitless and overcast days, that all in
sable,
Trail one upon the other in sluggish greyness,
Barrenly listless.

O sorrow of exalted, majestic rhythms,
O sorrow of funereal, billowing rhythms,
Where in darkened shrine the black-robed priest
Sanctifies a requiem.

Ah bitter vainness of hope ! All must end.
All vanishes, fades, congealed and chilled in
ashes.

All outlived and marred. All is wasted,
Mere shadow amid shadows.

O heaviness amid unsounding, motionless heaviness.

O hand of death, laid suddenly upon the forehead.

O horror of ending, that at the last, sets aquiver
the body,

Which long has been dying.

Calm, endless calm! And final oblivion.
Calm of the dead, who are resting in vaults
Under a heavy slab with its arching scutcheon
Of perished kinsmen.

Calm of deadened waves on unquivering oceans,
That many a year no vessel has furrowed,
That darken in tints of metal and duskiness,
Barrenly day upon day. . .

Calm of divine pangs, withering in solitudes,
Calm of tottering crosses, blackened in the
twilight,
In decayed and unpeopled regions, abounding
With chillness of horror.

Calm of ancient ships, astray amid oceans,
Which in the North are frozen amid eternal ice,
Whose crews long have perished beneath the
masts,
Tortured by hunger.

Calm that is death's, pallid and stiffened,
As the countryside at night in the greenish moon-
rays,
Calm of all those, who have fared, but to falter
In the midst of the journey. . .

“ *Conversations with Death* ” (1904).

ANTONÍN KLÁŠTERSKÝ.
FROM THE "IRONICAL SICILIAN
OCTAVES" (1913).

1. ART.

I PENNED a mighty epic poem of yore,
But afterwards observed that it was naught,
And burnt it; but with *one* chant I forbore,
Which was a gem of sentiment, methought.
Later, with deeper care, I read it o'er,
And quoth: "Its point in *satire* could be
caught!"
But now—the reader gleefully may roar—
Only an epigram, in fine, I've wrought.

2. OFFICIAL SOIRÉE AT PRINCE X's.

THE prince bids welcome. Sombre garments
mate
With flash of uniforms. All ranks are here.
Some stand in clusters, others sit in state;
Flunkeys with wine and lemonade appear . . .
Heels click and clash. See some bald baron prate
His tittle-tattle. Laughter. Some get clear
In starving pangs, some empty many a plate—
Cigars cram someone's pockets at the rear.

3. FROM A MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL.

THIS worthy man will soon be fifty . . . Sirs,
 I think . . . in him such qualities we meet . . .
 A patriot . . . it everywhere occurs . . .
 A house we'll buy him . . . cheaply, all complete . . .
 I've one for sale. . . His life is full of burrs ;
 Let his old age be jubilant and sweet. . .
 Rank opposition noisily demurs :
 " No house ! But after him we'll name a street ! "

4. FUNERAL RITES.

HE is no more, alas ! So great, so rare !
 His merit gleams, a star in gloomy sky.
 See, what black edges all the papers bear,
 And in the streets half-mast the flags will fly.
 The grateful nation ! Not an inch to spare
 In sorrow's dwelling. . . Hear the widow's cry—
 While round the pressmen crowds are jostling
 there,
 Their names for publication to supply.

5. A QUESTION.

THE critic writes : “ Our art appears to me
Quite weak and wheezy in its aged distress.

Where can our epoch’s youthful spirit be?

Who’ll chant of spring in poems that possess
The sap of spring? Who from the grave will free
Youth, strength, with wondrous verses for their
dress?”

He wrote. And rubbing both his hands with glee
He squinted at his *own* book, in the press.

6. TO CZECH POETRY.

ONCE not a hair of yours durst slip aside ;

Staidly attired, you let no tress be shown ;
But then you loosed your locks, and far and wide,
Like birch-boughs in the breezes they were
blown,

Dishevelled thus,—but there is naught to chide ;

My ample love for you has never flown,
Whether your hair be trammelled or untied,—
If but the locks you show us are your own.

JAN SVATOPLUK MACHAR.

1. BROODING.

A FEW more years,—and they will drag my bones,
And let them in a charnel-house be shed,
After my melodies have hushed their tones,
Mute as a grove, whence nightingales have fled.

Will someone then the empty skull upraise
Upon his trembling hand, with Hamlet's view
Amid the cradle of my dreams to gaze,
That has to nature paid its final due?

Will he mark out each divers track of thought,
The irk of love, and all the anguish there?
And will the pallid jawbone tell him aught
Of laurels that this brow was fain to wear?

And will he wonder where the soul may lag
That once urged on its wings to starward flight?
Pooh! He will mumble forth some pious tag,
And cast the livid skull away from sight!

“*Confiteor*” I. (1887).

2. AUTUMN SONNET.

WE in our sentimental salad-days
Loved autumn, and the leafage drooping sere,
And the descent of misty greys
On gardens growing drear.

But now these things to man are dear :
The mighty sun, that on the sky-line sways
In glory ; and the days in warm career,
The glow of earth beneath his feet ablaze.

When tearful autumn roves across the land,
And everywhere a parlous mist is poured,
And every day a purgatory seems—

We gladly clutch the wine-cup in our hand ;
For there the ardour of the sun is stored,
Heat of July and bliss of summer dreams.

“ Four Books of Sonnets ” (1890-92).

3. OCTOBER SONNET.

ONLY an anguished melody still flows
From earth where hazes spread a veiling net. . .
In every nook the faded beauty stows
Her faded blooms, lest springtide she forget.

But the desire, as ere to gladden, glows
Within ; unchilled her inmost ardour yet,
And gaudy sashes round her waist she throws
And asters in her tresses she has set.

Fain would she laugh as in her bygone days—
But 'mid her wrinkles laughter takes to flight
And from them only pity, pity cries. . .

Divining this, perchance she has surmise :
A hundred tears each morn her garb displays
Shed in the anguish of her sleepless night.

“ Autumn Sonnets ” (1892).

4. ON GOLGOTHA.

It was the third hour, when the cross was raised
Betwixt the crosses.

From their striving flushed
Upon the trampled, blood-stained earth, the
soldiers

Had sat them down. They shared the raiment out.
Then for the shirt, that had the woof throughout
They played at dice.

And many from the crowd
Approaching thither, turned their gazes upwards,
Wagging their heads, and jeering : Ho, ho, ho,
Down from the cross,—'twas king you dubbed
yourself !

You were the one, who would destroy the temple,
And in three days would build it up afresh,
Help now yourself !

Priests also tarried there,
And there were scribes with white and flowing
beards ;

They said amongst themselves : 'Tis very true,
He would help others, let him help himself.—
And from afar were many women gazing,
Who had of old served him in Galilee,
Salome, Mary and the Magdalene ;
They to Jerusalem had fared with him.

Numbered with rogues, he hung upon the cross,
Naked and shorn. Upon his lash-seared body
Clung clots of blood. And on his hands and feet
The red streaks oozed, drops trickled to the earth.
With rigid stare his eyes were turned afar
Across the glittering town, the knolls and groves
To crests of peaceful hills, in whose lap lie
Blue waters of the Galilean lakes.

He bowed his head.

Then to his ear was wafted
The hum of plumage. Not his Father's angel
With quickening draught for the exhausted soul,
An unclean spirit spread his vampire-wings
And scoured the air and lighted at his side.
He could not flinch, when Satan sat him down
Upon his cross,—yea, squatted at his head,
For his tired spirit was disarmed from strife.

And Satan said : “ O hapless sufferer,
Upon this wooden cross we meet again,
To-day, and then no more. To-day 'tis settled,
The fight fought out.

You know, three years have passed,
Since in the wilderness I bore you forth
On to a lofty peak and let you see
Strong kingdoms, all the glory of the world,
And all I promised you, if you would sink
And kneel before me. But you flouted it.

You went to preach the coming realm of heaven
Unto the poor, the weak. To stainless hearts
You offered treasures of undwindling worth.
To simple souls you sought to show the way
Unto the father's glory. From men's brows
You strove to cleanse the trace of Adam's curse.

You turned to death with calm abandonment,
Like to the lamb, that opens not its mouth,
And you have shed your blood as it were dew,
So that your new-sown grain might not be
 parched.

Jesus of Nazareth, behold these throngs,
That surge like billows round about your cross!
'Tis not long since, when glorified you rode
Into the town, they littered palms beneath
Your ass-colt's hoofs, and they cried unto you
Your glory, and proclaimed you David's son,
For they supposed, that now the realm of God
Was heralded, and this the longed-for time
Of milk and honey. But you flouted it.

The cozened throngs then in the wrath of
 vengeance

Dinned "Crucify!" into the ears of Pilate.
And here they loiter, wagging with their heads
And jeering : Yonder hangs the King of the Jews!
Find he his own help,—he's the Son of God.
His Father hath, forsooth, forgotten him!—

The Father has forgotten.

See this sky,

Where in full glory, you have deemed, he sits :

Cloudless and radiant it softly smiles

With that blue unimpassioned smile, the same

After you, as before you. And the birds,

Scouring the air, and every living creature

That roves the earth, has lived and lives to-day

After a single law,—and that is mine.

The stronger ever preys upon the weaker.

And so with mortals too. This whole wide world

Is my domain. For I am Life itself.

I rule alone. I lurk in hearts and souls,

And none shall hound me out or banish me.

Not you, and not your Father. Your God's king-
dom

Is dream. That dream I leave to men for ever.

Under the cross, behold the Roman captain

In peaceful converse with the white-haired scribe !

So shall it ever be. These twain inherit

Your words, your dreams. The one will change
his idols,

The other his Jehovah in your name,

And in my covenant the world shall live.

Why did you scorn to take all kingdoms then,

And the world's glory from my bounteous hand?

Then your young life would not have ended here

In shameful pangs, you might have lived un-
trammelled

To your own gladness, to the weal of myriads.
What have you brought? You sowed dispute and
 death,
Yourself first victim. For your name, your
 dreams,
Hundreds and hundreds yet will shed their blood
On crosses, in arenas, judgment-places.
And when it seems as though your dream has
 conquered,
Then in your name, and only in your name
Shall murder thrive. As far as eye shall see
Will stand a rank of flaring stakes, whereon
Burning of victims in your name shall be,
And in your name shall frenzied wars be waged,
And in your name shall towns be set ablaze,
And in your name shall countries be laid waste,
And in your name shall malediction speak,
And in your name shall there be servitude
Of body and of spirit.

 See this captain

And here, this scribe. The first will, in your
 name,
Do murder and the second, in your name,
Will bless him. Millions of ill-fated men
Will forfeit for your dream their dearest portion,
Their life.

 And over all the squandered blood
Your dream of the eternal realm of God,
Of heavenly glory, will go drifting on
Like a mere wraith to recompense the dead,

To lure the living till the crack of doom !
Why did you scorn to take all kingdoms then
And glory of the earth? For mine is life,
I, I am life, and lord of all things here,
And age on age I lurk in hearts and souls !”

And Satan then uprising, folded out
His tawny-hued and mighty vampire-wings,
Whose girth with stirring of a tempest waxed
Dread, overwhelming. On all Golgotha,
Above the town, the valley and the hills,
Above the plain, above the distant mountains,
Above blue-watered lakes of Galilee,
Above the realms and oceans far-removed
The black and frowning mantle was outstretched.

And there was mighty gloom on all the earth,
And quaking.

And last time of all, the eyes
Of Jesus turned, and with loud voice he cried :
“ Eloi, Eloi lama zabachtani !”
And breathed away his spirit. . .

“ *Golgotha* ” (1902).

5. LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

CALL not the surgeon,—he'll avail me naught,—
It was a goodly wound,—a devilish stripling,—
But only prop my head, that I may set
Last things in order,—As a keep-sake, have

My steeds, lieutenant,—and be worthy of
 The spirits of the beasts,—Corporal, receive
 My sword,—’tis full of stains,—but cleanse them
 not,

They’re the renown of it,—No priests for me,—
 Too late for that,—and where’s the need, at all?—
 The emperor’s captain hath his place in heaven,—
 Yea, sure a thousand,—two, ’tis very like,—
 Czech pike-men I converted to the faith
 Of Rome,—likewise dispatched to hell,—for so
 Need sometime was,—Upon my breast I have
 A wallet with a brace of thalers,—wait
 Give ’em the priests for mass,—not for my soul,—
 That hath, so said I, warranty in heaven,—
 But for a pike-man,—Once,—’tis years ago,—
 Father Ignatius with me, I did swoop
 Upon a village,—heard the creed out,—well,
 ’Tis thus we drave the straying herd unto
 Salvation’s fount,—Inside a building sat
 An aged pike-man,—he was stubborn,—laid
 Hands on the book,—and on its print,—Stood out
 Shook his old pate,—a lime-tree stood within
 The courtyard,—and thereon I bade them hang
 This errant soul,—And as they led him forth,—
 He gazed at me,—Thou art a murderer,
 Sir Captain,—and some day or other, at
 The hour of death,—thou shalt remember me,—
 —I do remember,—how the eyes he had
 Were like to withered cornflowers,—yet it was
 No murder,—for therein ne’er shifted ground

Father Ignatius,—Yet for safety's sake,—
 Give ye the thalers,—that they read a mass
 For that same pike-man's soul,—that when my
 foot

Is set in heaven,—the carrion may not
 From flames of hell look forth upon me with
 Those eyes of his,—the ending,—Yea,——be-
 cause—

“*The Apostles*” (1911).

ANTONÍN SOVA.

1. ON THE HILL-SIDE.

HERE is the sweetest grass-plot for a bed,
 In softest lethargy to close the eyes,
 On naught to brood, nor yearn, but let the head
 Droop in the grassy couch. . . Like wreckage flies
 A huddled clot of clouds, that yonder soar
 Behind the mountain's ridge. . . All lulls thee
 here,

Insects adrone, grass, plant-stems bending o'er,
 The flight of sluggish moths. . . To thee appear
 Gleams as from waters, with a radiant leap.
 And by thy head there stands a calm unknown.
 Thou feel'st 'tis wondrous with the dead to sleep,
 For Earth has cradle-ditties of her own!

“*From My Country*” (1893).

2. FISHPONDS.

OUR fishponds are as moulded silver shed
With streaks of shadow under clouded skies,
Amid green herbage of the meadow spread
Like to the country's gentle, tender eyes.
Here pines the snipe in rushes near the shores,
Here is the teal, whose greenish plumage plays
In colours of the rainbow when he soars
Far off amid the sun's bespangled blaze;
Cooler are meadows where the sweet-flag grows,
And with the after-math its fragrance blends;
By wavelets cooled, the air in ripples flows,
And something sighs, like grief that never ends.

"From My Country" (1893).

3. SMETANA'S QUARTETTE "FROM MY LIFE."

(i.)

OUT of the concert-hall, as I were drunken,
Amid the bustle of the throng I staggered . . .
The seats clattered, and the lamp-bulbs stifled
Their bluish glimmer. Mingled fragrances
Floated above the jostle of living creatures
From shawls in which the ladies wrapped them-
selves. . .

Still in the practice-room the pizzicato
Of a violin sobbed tenderly near by,

Beneath the player's finger ; he was flushed with
The tempest of applause ; with toying lilt
Echoing laughter shook ; a lackey's voice
Trickled away, a girl's voice cooed and chirped ;
And a broad stream of townsfolk suddenly
Began to surge along the corridors
With carpet-muffled gait . . .

The night was clear,
The azure frosty sky breathed on my face,
And piercing was the glisten of the snow.
There in a torrent from the staircase swayed
Blurred masses of a motley city crowd.
Cabs clattered on and carriage doors were
 slammed,
Somewhere the ambling trot of horses faded,
Merged in bewildering hubbub of the streets.

(ii.)

Oh, marvellous, oh magical quartette,
Setting the soul astir as genius can,
Rousing the spirit on to manful strivings !
Its mighty breath still fares along with me ;
Ardour, youth's tempest, blitheness, melancholy,
Laden with wistfulness and suffering,
Dreams of young escapades and languishing,
Enticing musters of love-brimming words,
Placid noblesse, and then harsh storms again,
Singly the strains unloosen in my soul ;
And then,—that note that ends itself in horror,
As if it were left hanging on a height ! . . .

(iii.)

He quitted life with staid submissiveness,
When he had heard but this one lofty tone,
When voice of friends he caught not, nor the
thunder

Heard of the orchestra, nor had he heard,
Even if earth were riven with a crash,—
He who heard not the tune of his own poor hands,
When the lights glowed above a marvelling
throng,—

He who heard not acclaim nor mockery,
Only with sorely ailing brain tracked all,
And to its time-beats let his baton swing
Above the busy giant orchestra :
And tracing out the agile, speechless movements,
In sheer conception of the manifold strains,
He stood there in his dead, unmoving calm. . .

(iv.)

O master, master, this thy mighty song,
Wherewith we go to trade in mighty marts,
Whereby we thrust our culture on a booth,
God's pity, is unended, still unended :
In it is lacking still thy final outcry
Of one, who in the treachery of darkness
Is grappling with his dreadful malady
And cravingly he snatches at achievement,
Snatches at moments in his soundless void,

Snatches at light in his dismantled brain,
 And gropes for cadences, but on a sudden,
 They slink away like sullen, sneering lackeys,
 Pillage the palace, setting it aflame,
 Abandon it and leave their master crazed
 And in a fearful bankruptcy of mind
 Stretched headlong in some room upon the floor...

O master, in this deathless song of thine
 There is no trace of gibing at the dogs
 Who dragged thee in their crassness and abase-
 ment

Setting a felon seal upon thy ruin,—
 It does not rail at them who welcomed thee
 From Göteborg with craven buffetings,—
 O master in this deathless song of thine,
 The dreadful end of thy benighted brain
 That dashed itself against a madhouse wall.
 The ending of the end is lacking yet,
 'Tis lacking there, 'tis lacking there, O master,
 My master, pardon, but 'tis lacking there. . .
 "A Shattered Soul" (1896).

4. TO THEODOR MOMMSEN.

To you, who have treacherously assailed my
 nation, covetous dotard,
 Brutish, overweening! To you, on the brink of
 the grave,
 Arrogant bastard of Roman emperors and
 conquering Germania;

To you, dotard, blinded by vainglory,
I chant the infuriate song of a barbarian, aroused
by the smiting of hoofs.

With metallic buffetings
Scornfully I smite your enwrinkled visage,
O bestial fanatic of relentless Kaiserdom;
Your shrivelled temples I smite, your turgid
Neronic lips I smite,
Covered with foaming of impotent fury.

Was this the "reason" you discovered amid the
ruins of Rome,
Which now seeks to lay in store of flesh for the
slaughter-house,
And to shatter the brains of manacled and van-
quished victims?
For your unified Imperium to humiliate bonds-
men in hordes,
Whom gladly you viewed trampled upon in
triumphal arrays,
Humiliated by Roman Caesars, the bondsmen in
hordes,
Meet to be fashioned into saleable myrmidons to
enrol for the Imperium.

Arrogant spokesman of slavery!
Do you behold naught else but the blossoming
peaks of your country,
And all beyond would you leeringly crunch
Beneath war-chariots of the conquerors
And their uncouth tread?

Now, after battle-triumphs of your Imperium,
You hankered to enslave what of Europe re-
mained,
To enslave, to enslave, woefully to enslave,
Bondsmen predestined for seizure, dung for
enriching of soil,
Beasts to be yoked to the chariot of triumph,
And from them you deemed barbarians, to break
in levies
For the Imperium, your insatiate Imperium.

But, even as once, long ago
We flouted the flabby wisdom of your Luther,
Reformer purveying peace unto contentedly fat-
tened townsmen,
Begetting children with God-abiding spouses,
And stifling freedom,
So now do we flout your crude, senile wisdom!
It is enkindled not by sorrow of us, nor of all
humanity;
Therein is not the purity that perishes for its
faith;
Therein is not the passion wherewith the martyr
of Constance* was ablaze;
And therefore, brutish dotard,
Grown hoary in the service of your baneful
Imperium,
From whose relentless wisdom are hidden the
mysteries of maltreated spirits,

*Hus.

What avail you now your lore and your revered
gray hairs?
Your sorry wisdom has conceived not the light of
righteousness,
Nor the gladness of youthful nations in their own
destining ;
Has conceived not that an ancient culture durst
not enslave,
Would it warm and illumine,
And not be but a chafing and burdensome
Monstrous millstone about the neck of a galley-
slave !
What avail you revered gray hairs, since you
babble senile saws,
O dotard, tottering on the brink of the grave ;
Since you have forgotten to proclaim unison and
humaneness,
Destruction of tyrannies and of hatred ;
Since you have forgotten to reconcile the world
and its frail being,
And to utter a prayer for all-accomplishing com-
passion?
What avail you revered gray hairs, since you
drudge for darkness,
In an age when a myriad slaves hunger with an
all-human suffering
And clamour at the portals of retrieval !
Since through the causeways of ancient cities
range spirits of anarchy
Scoffing at your Kaiserdom ;

Since from down-trodden bondsmen of all castes
and all nations,
Flicker the first torches of humanity,
Even as from amid the barbarians impaled upon
stakes by Nero,
Blazed forth the lustre of Christendom !

Over your grave, that our grandsons shall forget
not,
They will glitter, torches ablaze, unto your sight-
less eyes,
And will lay bare your words, wherein is sealed
the downfall of your race ;
—But ere that, I, with the retaliation of disdain
Welling up from the sorrowful soil of this cower-
ing age,
Advance to the rim of your grave,
And fling it upon you, despotical dotard,
That with this grinding reproach you may be
burdened eternally, eternally. . .
(1897).

5. THE RIVER.

It was like to a child,—slender the springlet
Glistening among the coarse-grained sand—
In gigantic, unpeopled stillness
Old Earth brought it forth
Under the trees coloured with mistletoe,
Under twilit depths of shaggy firs,
In gigantic stillness it sang through the grass
From serried wedges of lime-stone rocks.

Unwieldy black pine-stems were lying
Like transparencies of the yellowish sun
Upon its crinkled surface.

Their bloated roots were like swarthy leeches,
And wavering shadow came only to drink of it. . .
While in glory it sang and in rhythm of life. . .

O passing winsome it was in the murk of the
night,

When forests were ending their song unto it,
Into the moon-lit plain it poured from the hollow,
How the black clattering mills seized it
Craftily into their unwieldy circlings,
That, grievously crushed into lissom dust,
It screeched and simmered, stormily tumbling!

As if stunned, upon tip-toe, it slipped through the
grass,

As if stunned, softly upon tip-toe,
To sorrow-girt coverts, where the silver of the
moon

Soldered the spare birches to their ground-plots
And osiered fields in the twilit hazes.

O, was it fain to set the glorious vaultage of
heaven

And all creation glittering in warm tranquility,
The song of the stars chanted to the Unknown,
Aquiver upon its surface

And glory of night ere birth of the day
And its golden foot-print?

Came forth then the first tortured mortal
Unto the radiant sheen of shifting vapours,
From mists the vagrant hobbled over the
pastures . . .

Slipped his bloodstained tatters over his feet
Livid with foulness and canker, in which Death
squatted,

He plunged his running wounds therein. . .
And the sky-line grew dim and dim afar,
Thickening mists in the fens, where a bird
faltered,

Canker of grave-yards, stench of mortal remains
Wafted from the banks a burial requiem. . .

Through gulleys leaked foul contagions,
Mouldering in quagmires, from the rended lining
Like ulcers they burst forth therein, meadows,
Water-logged marsh-land they lulled there to
slumber,

In the wake of the wind sobbed a burial
requiem. . .

Here it floated into the city cess-pool. . . Windows
Hurled their sheds of light upon its surface
And magic of homesteads was trailing eerily
On the wrinkled waters
And trees dipped their sickly green, garlands
loosened from cornices
Straggled down in the tarnished mirror of the
waters.

Here mockeries of mortal being were revelling,
Here shrieked the song of unmolested espousals,
Writhing orgies of man the carnal
Of herds that are huddled and wedged together
By sharing the pangs of inherited sins.

Days, straggling levies of muffled martyrs,
Breathed out plague on the torrid paving
With stench of serried throngs in decay,—
Of beings unperished. . .

Despair cheek by jowl with rejoicing glittered,
fruit of their thoughts in their gaze
Like lamps consumed by tardy ages
Of dismantled souls on a lengthy journey,
Beings remoulding their birth in creation. . .
And roaring from the city cess-pool, it carried
The first poisoned corpses in a greenish slime
It carried them forth, roaring a burial requiem
To torrid sands of days without hope. . .

Whither away, O my soul? Already I behold
New Sorrows plunging in thee from afar
Pinnacles of their loftiest turrets. . .

“*Overmastered Sorrows*” (1897).

6. SONGS OF THE FIRST MAY-TIDE.

(v.)

THE son of motion,
The son of radiance and airy spaces,
From his youth in the eddies of life,
He, whose heart was bleeding
With tenderness and with manly strength,
When in the night he stood musing
Over the town that has perished,
He heard this funeral chant :
O miserere, O miserere,
Woe worth the land that has perished. . .

Over the silenced homesteads
It sang in a graveyard-stillness :
O miserere, O miserere. . .
The weary, unventuresome and humble
Have withdrawn them from life. . .
Here in over-eloquent muteness
Is the desert of Europe with artless beauty. . .
The grass withers, that her bondsmen
May be bedded the softer
In days and in nights of hunger. . .
How rich here the waxing of pine-woods :
There is need of coffins for all the people. . .
Upon the pigmy acres
Is reared only the tillage
Of a time of faintness and death. . .

O miserere, O miserere,

O miserere. . .

Yet twain in this place have splendour :

The burials and the sunset. . .

(VI.)

The son of motion, thus hearing,

The son of radiance pondered with sorrow :

Wherefore doth Europe passionately embrace

Only the soothly alive,

Only the venturesome, strong and self-certain

Peering into the most sequestered corners,

Those, scouring the oceans,

Those, cruising on tracks of the globe,

Those, blithely trafficking with settlements,

Those, mustering courage, unshipping wallets of
gold

Yonder in regions, where the armourers sing

Amid passionate roaring of blow-pipes,

Where newly-moulded cannon are upreared,

Where in havens of war dusky vessels tower
aloft? . . .

O, long since was the son of motion witness :

That Europe doth passionate embrace

Only those, who in sooth are alive.

Those victorious after dreadful combats,

Those, loving fruits of the centuries' lore,

Those, who in contest have won them a place,

Yea, if need be, with dagger in hand,
Ere the fateful scenes are in action
Behind a suddenly-lifted curtain. . .

"Three Chants of To-day and To-morrow" (1905)

OTAKAR THEER.

1. CITY.

CITY— —!

With our young dreams we have set foot within
thee

Bewitched by the legend that hung in the gold of
thy turrets,

Half foreboding thy beauty, thy marvellous life,
Whereof nurses told us tales, yonder afar, by the
country-side.

Thou hast shown us thine unmatched counten-
ance, us untempted

Hast thou taken unto thine embraces and lulled
with a smile.

What thou didst murmur to us on sluggish after-
noons, was :

Mighty deceit, that slumbered in thine un-
bounded gaze.

Then while the countryside awoke to glittering
mornings,

Then while peasants sowed grain into the dusky
soil,

Then while through firmaments surged a deluge
of mighty love,

Thou didst take from us all, that was ours to
take,
Our simple hearts, full of dreams and beauty,
Our strength, our freedom, our faith, peaceful
and assuaging.

“ *Campaigns Against the Ego* ” (1900).

2. TEMPEST.

ROAR, spring-tide tempest! Bellow, din,
Thy thousand hoofs shall clatter!
Roar on in sorrow, headstrong grief,—
Thy woe is a goodly matter.

Spur on the clouds and trample the wood,
Canter over the river.
Dazingly every buffet of thine
In my every vein shall quiver.

As brothers we sink to watery depths
From heaven at our sorrow's lashing.
Destroying and rending, leap by leap,
Brothers akin we are crashing,—
And we know not whither and why.

“ *Anguish and Hope* ” (1912).

JAROSLAV VRCHLICKÝ.

1. ECLOGUE VII.

How can there be a heart by hope unthrilled?

Hark to the sound

Of black-birds; nests around

With mighty drops of dew are filled.

The forest-lovers in calm, rock-strewn ways

How joyously were beaming!

Their dreaming

Was knit by doves amid their smiling lays.

Quoth they : " Who can us here behold?"

Then sped

The sun, and quivering shed

Upon their clinging lips his gold.

" Who knows of all the vows that we have
uttered?"

Then from a flower drew nigh

A butterfly

And 'mid their hair entangled fluttered.

Who would of sun, of butterfly beware?

For see,

Beneath each darkening tree

A very idyll they prepare.

" Eclogues and Songs " (1880).

2. EVENING IN PARIS.

IN the drab air what sultry surfeit lies !
Still through sparse leaves the sunset flares, and
throws

Sparks in the river ; a last lustre glows
In windows, as it were in dying eyes.

And lamp with lamp down yonder, ghost-like,
vies

A hundred-fold ; like distant thunder-blows
Carts rumble on ; like crags in shattered rows
Pillars of Trocadero dusk-ward rise.

Twilight has faded ; all is ashen-gray.
The spectral arches of the bridges wane.
Yet life still pulses there in seething husk.

Whither are bound these thousands on their way?
The soul in this strange eddy quails with pain,
And likewise shrouds it in the ashen dusk.

“ *What Life Gave* ” (1883).

3. A LEGEND CONCERNING MODERATION

WHEN Brother Zeno after meat was sleeping,
A mountain-gnome stood in his cell's drab haze,
Where through the window, with its thousand
lays

The forest peeped and fragrances were sweeping.

Warily, not to mar the monk's repose,
He like a shadow to the table stole
And drank a lusty bumper from the bowl
With relish ; through the window back he goes.

Then the good Zeno, waking, seized again
The tankard, but amazed to find it bare,
Drowsily shook his head, right well aware
How deep a draught he ere his sleep had ta'en.

Then he feigned slumber craftily, and snored
In token of sound sleep ; the gnome had crept
To drink, when up the monk in anger leapt,
But as he seized his ear, with laughter roared :

“ Thou rascal, thou misshapen imp of hell.”

“ Hold, man of God,” the gnome was whispering,
His voice like withered leaves, “ so small a thing
Begrudge me not, when thou hast drunk so well.”

“ Rich recompense upon thee I will shower.”
Then loosing hold, “ What say'st thou?” Zeno
spake.

And from that time, the gnome his thirst would
slake

From the monk's tankard in the self-same hour.

The years slipped by, the brothers passed away,
But Zeno like a bloom-filled apple-tree,
Though silvery-haired, felt not his years, but he
Was still content and affable and gay.

He kept his hundredth year, and now he sees
The boon wherewith the gnome fulfilled his task ;
When abbot he became, he broached a cask,
His thirsty crony from the hills to please.

And when with tear-dimmed eye he sank in
thought

Of the dead brothers, " Had ye all " he spake
" Had with you such a gnome, his thirst to slake,
Ye all to-day your praise to God had brought."

" Of strokes and rheumatisms surely free
Your hearts and faces would be rose-bedight.
Drink, gnome ! For moderation hath more might
Than holy water and all sorcery."

" Butterflies of All Colours " (1887).

4. THE INGLE NOOK.

Two gnarled old willows o'er the water droop,
And in it wet their boughs that trail and droop ;
A mighty poplar guards the vale's retreat ;
The cooling current flows around its feet ;
A hazel hedge, whose tangle bars the way
Shelters a maid with glowing lips,—she may
Be six years old ; her little feet are bare ;
Upon a cow she turns a blue-eyed stare,
And in her sunburnt hands a grass-bunch lies.
The cow has fixed her big and trusting eyes
Upon the maid, and mutely thanks her thus
For tufts of bird-grass and ranunculus,

And dandelion and milfoil, weedy bunches
The cow, her tongue bedecked with white foam,
 munches.

The hands now bared, the lap she searches
 through;

In shade two dragon-flies sport, green of hue.

“ *The Magic Garden* ” (1888).

5. WALT WHITMAN.

WHO art thou?—But an atom, quick with song.
What wilt thou?—Naught.—Where flee'st thou?
 —Back again

To her in whom for ages I had lain,
Ere wonder bore my dreaming soul along.

What see'st thou?—All, as merged amid one lay.
What creed fulfill'st thou?—Righteousness and
 toil.

Thy comrade?—All!—Whom meetest thou in
 broil?—

All men are right, to whomsoe'er they pray.

What rat'st thou highest? Boundless liberty!—
Thou fear'st not death?—'Tis life in other
 guise.—

What recks thee fame?—Less than an insect's
 drone.—

Thy laws?—My will can fashion them for me.—
Thy joy?—To watch creations billows rise,
And take its visions for my spirit's own.

“ *New Sonnets of a Recluse* ” (1891).

6. MOURNFUL STANZAS.

LET on my brow thy hand so gently fall
That I be not aware how late it grows :
Moss decks the boulder, bloom-clad is the wall.
Through withered grave-yard wreaths a murmur
 goes,
When the November evening earthwards flows.
Let on my brow thy hand so gently fall
That I be not aware how late it grows.

Long have we gone together.—Go we still ;
Not roses, but bare ivy give I thee ;
I sing not nightingales' but wood-birds' trill,
The child's lament that strays upon the lea ;
Thou knowest joy, I know but misery.
Long have we gone together.—Go we still,
Not roses, but bare ivy give I thee.

When roses fade, the ivy still is whole
And around graves it twines in faithful wise :
Till death uncages, as a bird, the soul,
Long do I crave to kiss thy faithful eyes.
When roses fade, the ivy still is whole,
And around graves it twines in faithful wise.

Let on my brow thy hand so gently fall,
That I be not aware how late it grows ;
That, what we in long even-tides recall
Fill our remaining journey with repose :
Thine eyes brought all the peace my being knows.
Let on my brow thy hand so gently fall,
That I be not aware how late it grows.

“ *Life and Death* ” (1892)

7. MARCO POLO.

I, MARCO POLO, Christian and Venetian,
Acknowledge God the Trinity and cherish
Hope of salvation in eternity
For my sin-laden soul : In this my faith,
In this my trust is set. What of my love,
Ye ask? And I give answer tranquilly :
My love is long and distant journeys ; ever
New-found horizons, new-found peoples, fresh
Exploits on ocean and dry land, and ever
Fresh enterprises. (This, my forebears' blood)
Much have I seen, to much have given ear ;
I reached the land, whereof ye scarce have
inkling,
Where amber grows like golden foliage,
Where salamanders (that ye dub asbestos)
Blossom and blaze like lilies petrified,
Where glowing naphtha gushes from the earth,
Where there is equal wealth of rubies, as

Of holly here in winter ; where across
Their back and on their shoulders they tattoo
The image of an eagle ; where the women
Alone rule, and the men are given up
From birth to heavy service till they die.
I gazed upon the realm whose ruler is
Khan of Cathay ; and I have sat at meat
With those who feed on men : I was a wave
Amid the surf : the mighty emerald
(Pre-destined for the vizier of Bagdad)
Beneath my tongue I carried through the desert.
For thirty days and nights I came not down
Out of my saddle. I have seen great deserts
Like ruffled raiment billowing afar ;
The ocean sleeping underneath the moon
Like a stiff winding-sheet ; strange stars ablaze
Beneath strange zones. I visited the realms
Of Prester John, where goodness, virtue and
Righteousness ruled, as in a legend,—yea,
Now meseems almost that I even reached
The wondrous nook of earth, where Alexander
Once lighted on the wilderness of Ind,
And came no farther on his way, because
Of mighty downpours that abated not.
(Perchance upon the faery realm he there
Set foot, or e'en upon the town celestial,
And shrank away in dread, when at the gate
An angel put a skull into his hand,
Saying : “ A few more years, and this shall be
Thy portion,—this, and not a tittle more !”)

And I beheld that land of mystery
Where lay the paradise of earth, where flowed
The spring of youth, concealed within the grass
Amid a thousand others, whence I drank
From many, and, 'tis very like, from youth :
And therefore all endured I with acclaim,
And therefore all, as in a mirror, I
Perceive within my soul, and now portray it.
The world is changed of aspect : I shall die
Like others, but my heritage remains :
The lust for seeing all and learning all,
To ransack all for the delight of man ;
Legion shall be my sons : they shall proceed
Farther than I, but scarcely shall see more,
For earth sheds wonders as a snake its skin.

Old age I know, with many dreams and secrets,
And that suffices me. And they who come
After me, let them take, as it may chance,
Of what remains to them, as best they can,
As I did. I sit foremost at the feast
Of distant journeys, and it likes me well.
All prospers me, and I fare well with all.
To make all life a vigil over books,
To rack one's brain 'mid piles of yellow parch-
ments,
Seeking the truth of writing and of thought,
Is much, in sooth ; to live an age in camps
'Mid roll of drums and trumpets in assaults,
O'er ramparts in a rain of missiles, in

Ruins of towns, amid laments of women,
 Weeping of children, groaning of the fallen,
 Is much, in sooth; to be a holy bishop,
 Legions of spirits heavenward to escort,
 (The which he knoweth not) by solace of
 The faith alone, and by the word of God.
 In marble and in gold to hearken to
 The cadence and the dreamy grief of psalms.
 Is much, in sooth; but to behold and know
 With one's own eyes the distant, ample lands,
 And oceans, plains and star-tracks of the skies,
 And divers folk, their habit, usage, gods,
 This too, availeth somewhat, and hath charm
 By special token of its newness, that
 Doth ever change. And I have lived it through,
 I, Marco Polo, Christian and Venetian.

"New Fragments of an Epic" (1894).

8. FROM "SONGS OF THE PILGRIM"

XVI.

It was in April. Youthful May
 Hard by a crag his shawm did play.
 A well-knit, sturdy youth was he,
 Each breath was filled with melody.

It was in June. And wearied there
 Stood Siren Summer: from her hair
 Fell bloom on bloom; the forest stilled
 Its roar; the bird no longer trilled.

'Twas in October ; o'er the plain
Careered the frenzied Maenad-train
With loosened hair ; on russet breasts
The ivy with the hop-sprig rests.

'Twas January ; flowers no more ;
Birdless the field, and at the door
A beggar cowered in silent woe,
His garb and beard bedecked with snow.

And there I sped with gaze outspread,
And deep within my heart I said :
“ This self-same landscape will arise
—How oft !—before my wearied eyes.”

“ *Songs of the Pilgrim* ” (1895).

SOUTHERN SLAV.

(a) SERBO-CROATIAN.

JOVAN DUČIĆ.

1. THE POPLARS.

WHY are the poplars to-night so aquiver?
So eerily, wildly? What betokens their sound?
The sallow moon has faded long beyond the
mound

Distant and dark as foreboding; on the river

Gloomily plunged in silence, leaden and grey
Visions have been scattered amid this dead night.
The poplars alone, upreared upon the height,
Rustle, rustle eerily and skyward sway.

Alone in the night by the silent water here
I stand, as the last mortal. It is my shadow that
Lies earthward before me. To-night I am in fear
Of myself, my own shadow, and I tremble
thereat.

2. MY POETRY.

STANDARDNESS of marble, coolness the shadow strews,
Thou are a still, pale maid, all pondering ;
Let songs of others be as a woman, whose
Wont it is in the unclean streets to sing.

I do not bedizen thee with baubles, nor
With yellow roses bespread thy flowing hair ;
Too beautiful shalt thou be for all to adore,
Too proud to live that others may think thee fair.

Be too sorrowful in the grief that is thine,
Ever to come with solace to them that pine ;
Too shamefast ever to lead the jostling throng.

Be ever placid, while thy body holds
Not a sumptuous garment in heavy folds,
But clusters of riddling mist that hover along.

VOISLAV ILIĆ.

1. BY THE VARDAR.

BROWN, never-ageing crags are proudly to heaven
uplifted ;
Over the bouldered depths, with clouds the eagles
are warring.
Downward with terrible burst into foam the Var-
dar is sifted,

Into the blue Aegean through narrowest crevices
pouring.

O waves, O Serbian river! So centuries forfeit
their traces,

Even as billows are plunged far down in
eternity's channels.

Yet do thy pearly droplets caress the rock-ridden
places

Where are upreared the remains of thy nation's
glorious annals.

Yet, as the heavenly Phoenix, shall gladsome
liberty glimmer;

Blithely shall I abide where mournful is now my
abiding.

Yea, and upon the girth of its wings, our eagle,
a-shimmer,

Over thy boulders be gliding.

2. THE LAST GUEST.

MIDNIGHT is long since past. Not a soul still left
in the tavern,

Save for the agèd host, who, close to the fire-
side cowering,

Fingers a bulky book. Without there is deadly
stillness,

And delicate drizzle of rain, and heavy darkness
lowering.

Then a rapping begins. To the tavern swiftly
approaches

An uncanny guest : on his lips a smile of horrible
presage :

His eyes with the hollow sockets stare round with
an empty chillness.

He bears a scythe in his hands. It is Death with
his icy message.

Clutching the bulky book, the host is in peaceful
slumber,

When Death draws near to him softly, and peace-
fully near him lingers.

And he takes in his hands a pen from the grimy
tavern table

And he sets his signature down with a twist of
his lifeless fingers.

Then he turns to the corner ; and out of the thin
half-darkness

Horribly grins ; with its fangs tempest clumsily
catches

And shakes at the darkened windows, and the
heavy oaken portals

And shrieks through the empty tavern in gloomy
and horrible snatches.

JOSIP KOSOR.

1. THE MAGICIAN'S FLIGHT.

THE ocean's magic and its scent,
The salt and pearls of it,
They harried and hounded me on the shore dark-
ling,
That I upraised my hands in despair,
To cling to the golden glimmer of starlight. . .

Into the giant shadow of the sun I plunged,
In the pallid mist I encountered the red moon,
That wept above an ocean teeming with dallying
angels. . .

And flutteringly to us they upraised
Their hands and their pinions,
Through which a lily-light trickled,
That made me weep my rapture into the light. . .
Aloof from us the slopes were mutely in tumult,
In the dim unending depths,
Where time and creatures and eternity
Strove with black talons, hovering above
abysses. . .

In wordless triumph I returned to the age-old
land

Where once as a glow-worm I glowed in the green
thicket. . .

Where I was all,
Water and metal,

Tree and the worm and the storm therein. . .

“ Welcome, welcome !”

Cried unto me the time-mother from all sides

With her brown mouth,

And girded me with her warm arms :

“ My well-beloved, eternal child !”,

That I shrieked and melted with bliss

And ever again emerged

In the countenance of all things,

Till a silvery skiff from the sickle of the moon

Bore me away hovering above oceans

And I rocked and blissfully fared

From night into night

From time into time . . .

Drunken with lustre and soul of the All. . .

2. QUAFFING THE STORM.

THE enkindled storm swept ragingly into the
great forest

And the forest stirred aquiver and sang

With gloomy voices

As when time in chaos began.

All trees clenched themselves in violence, in
strife,

An eagle the forest became,

Beating its pinions before avenging wrath of the
storm

Aloft to the richly-clad vault.

Drunken with wild joy

In a fluttering cloak I strained unto the gloom
And upraised a melody from my breast,
As the storm did the forest in enraptured
shouting.

In wild fire my arms outstretched themselves,
Vehemently clutched the dancing turmoil
And snatched it close to my throbbing breast
So that my heart and the forest
Beat wild and dark in a single stormy pulsing. —
With my time-old abode in my arms,
I slowly glided into all my dark life,
Deep, ever deeper, from abyss to abyss
And through all reeling abysses,
So that I saw myself swimming, creeping, and
growling again,
As at the dark beginning of time.
As I sank down, my head was bowed
Heavily upon the rim of Being,
My mouth foamed,
And twitched with a crazed smile of weeping,—
For wormwood of life and power of the storm it
had drunk.
And like a dying lover
Whose last thoughts gorge bleeding on his love,
So my thoughts clutched storm and forest
And were engulfed. . .

LAZA KOSTIĆ.

1. SYRMIA.

BEAUTEOUS Syrmia, thou my majestic,
Thou knowest naught of craggy immensities :
Thou dost not thrust thee in pride to the heavens,
Nor proffer thy love unto them,
Extending to them thy hands, naked, stone-
wrought,
In vehement ecstasy ;
Thou smilest, thou only smilest.
When God created this earth,
This buxom damsel,
A creature whose heart is of fire,
Whose body is of stone and of water,
Upon thee, Frushka, he carved this comeliness,
Magical lips ;
Thou smilest, thou only smilest.
This peerless smiling,
When for the first time heaven beheld it,
Downright I perceive how in enchantment
He opens his breast in its glory,
And showers upon thee rapturous blessing,
Lordliest lineage of his paradise,
Offspring of love, angel of passion,
Wine ;
Downright I perceive, how he vaunts to thee his
paradise,

How he proffers it thee,
This bounty withheld by godly caprice,
That of itself but moulders,
Unbeheld, unenjoyed and unglorified,
How he proffers it thee,
And thou smilest, thou only smilest;
And when thou art perceived from the midst of
paradise
By that ancient tree,
Of every apple the forebear,
Earliest saint and earliest sinner,
Its wound was opened
Beneath that single dissevered offshoot,
And it quivered.
Apples are shaken over thee
And in every dimple
Singly is scattered
The forbidden fruit.
In every valley of thine singly is scattered
A cloister glistening.
Unto thy lips the fruits are clinging;
Is haply the fruit forbidden eke to thee?
Ha, scion of Tantalus, Frushka the Tantalide!—
Worms devour it, spectral worms,—and thou?
Thou smilest, thou only smilest!

VLADIMIR NAZOR.

1. NOCTURNE.

Gently, gently, gently, spider
 Spins a thread ;
Where the fir-trees slimly loom, in woods, the
 stag has laid his head ;
Night, the silent, lofty, presses
 O'er the land with silvery glazes,
And a quenched lamp she raises
 From the water's deep recesses.
Guiding mortals by the hand, as blind sons,
 dream advances.
—I will weave a nest, O mother, deep within
 their glances—
Cricket from the grass is prying :
 See, O 'darling, see !
Gently, gently spins the spider
 Threadlets three.

Woe, woe, woe has gathered round me,
 Black and fierce.
In my breast a green-hued sprig of rose has made
 a thorn to pierce.
And my sobbing, sobbing, sobbing
In this lustrous night doth scatter ;
Pearly tear-drops downward patter ;
With restive wings I set them throbbing :

They are shaken, pitter-patter
On a marble platter.

O thou green-hued sprig of rose, within thy barb
a store of pain is,
And my bosom is so frail, and in this woe a store
of bane is !

From my heart the blood-drops patter :
Tap, tap, tap. . .

In that thorn from off the rose-tree poisoned is
the sap.

Can the moon reveal no splendour,
Or the night-bloom scent engender,
With this cry allayed?
Canst not, earth, to sleep surrender,
With my weeping stayed?

Dost thou crave another's anguish, that thou lull
to rest thy woe?

Stars are hotly dropping tears upon the meads
and dales below. . .

O sorrow is thus more tender !
Woe, woe woe.

Night with potent spell enchants my
Woodland calm.

Where, O where art thou, enchantress? Thee
thy friend calls with a psalm !

Hearken : chiming, chiming, chiming,—

Jasmin-calyx, scarce unfolded,

Lily-calyx, bigly moulded ;

Hearken : whirring, whirring, whirring
Of the juniper's green windle,
Of forget-me-not's blue spindle !
Blossoms scatter waves of fragrance in this
peaceful night.

O enchantress, hither, hither :
Now our troth we plight !
Cricket from the grass is prying :
See, O maiden, see !
Where our bed is softly lying
Gently spins the spider
Fibres three.

I am in this dim, deep night-time
All alone.

Unto whom my joy to utter and my sorrow to
bemoan?

Prithee, drench with wet caresses,
Dewdrop, wisps of elfin-tresses !
Prithee, drench, thou radiant shimmer,
Shepherd's-pouches with thy glimmer !

I am singing, singing, singing starry rays.
In my anguished breast have nestled all the
glories that are May's :

Every nook the wreath containeth,
Every kiss the petal gaineth ;
Sweetest fragrance that in billowings arises,
That is wafted, that is twirled in curving
guises,
That is rocking, that is swinging,
To the moth's and insect's winging ;

Breath of earth that sinks to rest in warm
embraces,

And the quiver of the stars in flashing traces :

Throbbing, lustre, perfume, surging

Heave their billows like an ocean

With my bosom merging!

I am singing, singing, singing in this night that
is enchanted,

In this warm, impassioned night, with wreaths
of blossoms round it planted,

Frail, alone.

Unto whom my joy to utter and my sorrow to
bemoan?

On the woodland branches growing

In the night, a thirsty bud is;

And my wounded heart is strowing

Drop by drop, the dew,—that blood is,—

Gently flowing.

Spider weave, O weave a net stoutly blended!

Gently, gently, lest thy fibre be rended!

There this night thou show'st no pity

To thy spoil!

Round these slender threads my ditty

Too, shall coil!

PETAR PRERADOVIĆ.

1. TO SLAVDOM.

WITH gesture of obeisance I bow myself down
unto thy black earth,
Having set foot on thy domain, riddle of all the
world,
Glorious, mighty, renowned, omnipotent Slav-
dom !
With eagerness my spirit trembles, unfurling its
wings
And dauntless of eye, clutches at the hollow
heavens,
Desiring now for glory of thee to soar loftily.
But how should my voice be upraised high
enough for thy world,
Where shall I, faced by thee, find strings potent
enough not to be rended,
When my soul, enkindled with the flash of thy
radiance,
Begins to thunder above? O would that, after
my desire, I were able
To weave threads from the golden fabric of sun-
beams,
That from shore to shore I might span them over
the wan ocean,
And that I might take for my bow the gleam-
ing rainbow aloft ;

Then when I drew it across the strings, the
ocean-depths should resound
With the immense roar of thy hidden powers,
and the waves
Should be mingled above in that graceful allure-
ment of Nature
With which breezes rustle and birds carol,
And the vault of heaven should re-echo it to me a
hundred-fold,
Uniting it all again in mighty harmony.
Then, O then only, were it mine to fashion
Such a song as is meet for the rapture and glory
within thee,
Thy bygone years, thy greater years to come.
Whither has thy girth
O mighty Slavdom, surged up? Like to an ocean,
The hand of God has poured thee out in earth's
bosom, and although
Foreignness with many and many a gulf eats
into thy soil,
Yet art thou still ample enough, that when thou
but stirrest,
With any limb of thine, all the earth is aquiver.
The stranger stands, dismay in his eyes, his
hands crossed,
Upon thy coasts, and thanklessly marvels at thee
And shudders with foreboding of terror. Where-
fore is he affrighted?
O, from thy greatness an unswerving conscience
metes out unto him

Requital which is his due for monstrous trans-
gressions against thee.

A pirate he cruised through thy waters, the
banner of the cross

Was his ensign, enlightenment the feigned
beacon he steered for ;

But his sails were swollen with the foul breath of
greed,

His hull guided by the hand of one rapaciously
exulting in plunder,

A sword was his oar, a spear his plummet for
thy depths,

And behind his vessel ever floated in blood a
cluster of corpses—

Thy slain. Heaven itself would have wept
To behold the fruit of its gentle labours on the
field of mankind,

Happiest race of them all, when a black curse
Mowed it down, and to behold the outcome of its
tending,

Greatest in number of dwellers, when virulent
savagery

Harried it to the bane of ages ; in fine, to behold
An image most like unto itself upon earth, when
in God's name

Godlessness evilly vexed it, and for the sake of
the cross

Nailed, as it were to the cross, the gentlest of
tribes.

The devoutest on earth.

But wherewith, O Slavdom, didst thou requite
This bloody debt unto the foreigner? Verily, by
 blood,
But by the blood of thy heroes in many a contest
With the sinister wildness of Asia, which with
 darkness
Threatened to quench even that tiny ray of twi-
 light
Which flickered in the west of the World. Even
 then, conceiving
Thy task magnificent as befits thy potency, thou
 didst not strive
Many a time for vengeance when hazard
 favoured thee;
The best hazard didst thou shape for thyself, as a
 mediator
Towards a seeing and a sightless world—to be
 intercessor
For the one, and against onslaughts of the other
To hold out thine heroic breast as a shield.
 And as thou stoodest proud
In twofold glory, so now thou standest on the
 marge
Of these two worlds as a giant whose stature can
 cope with
The supreme mission on earth: with one hand
 thou clutchest
Western stars of enlightenment, with the other
 thou sheddest them
Over the gloom of the east; but this is not thy
 sole renown;

With yet greater pride canst thou upraise thy
chivalrous head
Heavenwards. Upraise it, upraise it undaunted
and joyous
For the world to behold, that everywhere it may
see upon thine heroic brow
The kiss of light wherewith God's love hallows
thee
For his holy toil here below. Over the un-
bounded expanse of heaven
The Creator has inscribed by the stars the statute
of Love,
And by the eternal course of His decrees through
eternity
Has ordained its potency. Thus as His minister,
Everywhere and ever Love labours unfalteringly
it moulds, beautifies,
Softens and smoothen, pacifies, tames and
subjugates,
Assuages, ennobles, sanctifies, makes like unto
God
All that is God's in the world—thee He chooses
and empowers
From among the race of mankind to be hero
And idol of her. Ah, it fares ill upon earth
With those favoured by heaven : for heaven they
are in travail, and of hell
They cannot long elude the toils ; thus already
Thou bindest upon the thread of thy life
Ages of suffering, and upon each limb of thy
huge body

Thou feelest all human griefs diversely grievous.
Thou art mauled by hatred, selfishness and discord,
by wrath,
By evil and envy art thou mauled, every passion
engrafted
Upon thy weal by alien blood. Thy blood ever
seethes in thee
With poisoned ferment, through it all thy
bowels
Are set astir, thou reelest, swoonest, and mutely
art stunned ;
But yet with no step dost thou cease from
advancing
Further upon the path to Unity ; not to that one
Where treacherous foes unceasingly slander thee,
nor to that one
Whose token is one head adorned by an all-
embracing crown
Which outrages all (under such a crown
Every human head would droop) but to that one,
which must needs be crowned
By the garland of hundred-fold federation, the
concord
Of all wills, since it bestows happiness on all.
Concord is dawn, proclaiming
The eternal day of love ; already thy countenance
is aglow
With the flush of health—thy countenance which
was pallid

From grievous slumber. Already unto thee
 Krkonos^e,* Triglav, Tatra, the Balkans,
Ural and Velebit are aflame like new Horebs
Where the spirit of God is speaking afresh;
 already unto thee, Volga,
Vistula, and Danube, Vltava, Save and Drave
 are gleaming
Like new Jordans, wherein are baptised the new-
 born thoughts
Of the new age; already the dew of thy tears is
 everywhere radiant
With hope of solace at hand; hazes of morning
Already converse with thee in golden images of
 coming lustre;
Early breezes, a gentle foreboding of joy, already
 with their pinions
Fan thy bosom and brow, setting aquiver thy
 ponderings,
And mustering little by little thy chaotic
 emotions;
Thy spirit is striving against its last slumber,
 thy heart
Is grappling with its last weariness, thou shakest
 and heavest,
Strainest and rubbest thine eyes, already thou
 art at the point
Of rousing thee, of gazing in concord upon
God's beauteous day, whereof love is the sun-
 rise : oh, ere long,

*The Giant Mountains (known in German as the Riesengebirge).

Ere long thy tribes shall rally them, shall arise
and clasp

One the hand of the other, with a kiss they shall
evoke happiness

And heroic prowess, one unto the other ; ere long
shall love

Blaze up as an overwhelming pyre of happiness,
and all thy broad focus

Shall be its domain, with every heart that is thine

For its fuel ; resplendent shall be its exemplar

And hitherto unheard of, unseen in the world ;

The world to its utmost shall be amazed thereat,
and shall marvel,

Gazing and gazing ; till, dazzled by this torrent it
shall surrender.

And with it shall merge into a single realm of
love, into that realm

Which upon earth is foretold by the divine books.

Thus in the world's mighty design thou hast set
thee astir

Potently, in mankind's eternal contest for ad-
vancement,

Its strong protector, the hem of whose garment

All tribes upon earth should kiss in thanksgiving !

But so long as

This prison-planet, the which is called black by
its captives,

So long as it shall engender all dismay and
wretchedness,

Whereby it needs must punish its captives,
cherish not

Hopes that it will show itself beholden to thee :
because of the very keys that thou bearest,
Its bondsmen shall call thee their jailer, and
shall hate thee ; only when
A worthier humanity renders it softer, when the
world
Gazes forth, unwaveringly discerns and verily
traces
Heavenly order on earth, then only shall they
acknowledge thee
And ever extol thee as key-bearer of heaven. But
for now,
Only thy young generation together about the
tomb
Of fallen biases are linked in a single chain
And with a tumult, whereby the pulsing spirit of
time
Thunderingly heralds the march of humanity,
will fashion a psalm
Of praise unto thee, and with this melody already
The world on all four sides is re-echoing.

MILAN RAKIĆ.

THE DESERTED SHRINE.

CHRIST upon His cross lies in the ancient shrine.
Down His riven limbs blood leaves its clotted
trace ;
Dead His eyes and pale and lulled, Death's very
sign ;
Welded silver weaves a halo o'er His face.

Gift of old-time lords and pious populace,
Ducats on His throat, linked as a necklet, shine ;
On the frame the purest silver meshes twine,
And the frame was carved by smith of Debar's
race.

Thus, amid the lonely church, doth Christ abide,
And while gradual darkness falls on every side,
With a swarm of night-birds, on their prey
intent,

In the lonely shrine, where vampires wheel
around,
Christ with hands outstretched, benumbed and
horror-bound,
Endlessly awaits the flock that ne'er is sent.

SVETISLAV STEFANOVIĆ.

1. THE SONG OF THE DEAD.

To Laza Kostić.

WE have perished, 'tis said, and now are no
more. . .

Ruthlessly time all life bears away.

Over our bones sleep the days that are o'er,
And all that is left,—a mere phantom of gray.

But we wot it better, and smile at the race
Of beings that live. Man, a moment abide.
We know, thou would'st deem that thy life's
fleeting space
Was lavished from heaven itself to thy side.

- But lo, it was I who gave thee thy hair ;
—And mark thee, thine eyes, were they some
time not mine?
—With my lips thou the mind of a maid did'st
ensnare.
—'Tis my youth within thee doth blossom and
pine.

From us thou hast all that is much thy delight,
For thou art our fruit. With the past do not
strive,

Because upon tombs thy tapers burn bright,
We are not in the tomb,—we are in thee alive.

Each step that thou takest, beside thee we stay :
And behind thee, as true as thy shadow we
throng.

While with space and with time thou art waging
the fray,

Unnumbered to conquest we bear thee along.

2. THE GREATEST JOY.

CAN there, O soul, a joy more wondrous be,
Than, when is drawing near the hour to die,
And with the jaws of boorish death hard by,
To tell the world : All have I given thee.

'Tis only cravens fear mortality.

But I am strong, nor have a bondsman's eye :
Nay, proud as monarch o'er his realms, this cry
My lips shall utter, when no more I see.

And I shall tell to death, what in my heart
Of Hamlet's nature I became aware,
When by a swarm of sorrows I was riven :

—Naught from me hast thou power to rend
apart :

For in this world my body hath no share,
And to the next my spirit has been given.

3. THE IMPOTENCE OF DEATH.

HE, from whom death his life hath ta'en away
Hath suffered naught, for it was ne'er his own :
Who keeps his spirit's strength concealed, un-
known,
His whole life long in death's dominion lay.

But before death I like a spring shall stay,
Whence unto rivers potency hath flown ;
Dread obstacles that in its course are sown,
Hold it not back,—o'er lands and towns its sway

It casts around with undiminished might :
And when the hour of my last breath is near,
To gaze upon my end I shall not fear.

I shall dissolve, and many a stainless tear
Shall be a quiver in that deathless light
With whose array my spirit is bedight.

ALEXANDER ŠANTIĆ.

DALMATIAN NOCTURNE.

SEA bluely gleaming,

Dreaming ;

Chill darkness earthward falls.

The last red glimmer

Dimmer

O'er blackened ridges crawls.

And chimes are droning,

Moaning,

Trembling where rocks arise ;

Prayers have ascended,

Blended

With poor men's long-drawn sighs.

Before God's altar

Falter

This haggard wailing brood.

But ne'er is token

Spoken

By God upon His rood.

And dreams are nearer,

Clearer :

Chill darkness earthward falls.

The last red glimmer

Dimmer

O'er blackened ridges crawls.

(b) SLOVENE.

ANTON AŠKERC.

1. A PAGE FROM THE CHRONICLE OF
ZAJC.

GLORIOUS saint in heavenly salvation,
Father of Carthusians, Holy Bruno,
Thou who 'mid the barren vale didst bear us,
Yonder 'mid the vale Chartreuse didst bear us,
Thou who spreadest over us thy mantle,
Here at Zajc assembled in the cloister;
Be not angered, father, be not angered,
That thy son, the agèd Marijófil,—
Whilom the custodian of thy cloisters,
Prior now in this unworthy hostel,
Writes to-day this story in the annals,
To the parchment he consigns these tidings,
Tidings that perchance will sore afflict thee.

Thirty years have gone their endless journey,
Thirty years have slowly glided onward.
'Twas a day in autumn, warm and beauteous,
When I pilgrimaged unto this cloister,

Pilgrimaged bareheaded to this cloister.
In my right hand was the staff I fared with,
And the holy rosary in my left hand.
By the sanctuary I stayed my footsteps :
To the wondrous shrine I crossed the threshold.
Pouring through the lofty Gothic windows,
Entered in the radiance of the sunshine.
Empty was the house of God, deserted.
I, methought, at meat shall find the brethren.
Thither I behold the portals opened.
All the tables still with fare are laden,
But within the hall no living creature.
Through long passages alone I wander,
Empty are the cells and all is silent,
Naught is heard there save my echoing footsteps,
Strange the echo sounds amid the vaultage.
From the walls the portraits eye me gravely,
Gazing down upon me, as in wonder,
Images of priors long departed,
Images of old Carthusian brothers.
Soon a gentle terror comes upon me,
Roaming here and there,—how long I know not ;
Stay, for floorwards, in the gloomy passage
Standing but ajar I find a portal :
From the hall comes chatter, noise and chanting.
To this door I grope my way a-tiptoe,
And I hear, I hear the strangest discourse.
First a hush and then a voice sings loudly :

“ From divers lands and ages,
Books ceiling-high uprise ;
But yonder tome of verses
Above them all I prize.

“ For Horace I nor Pindar,
Sappho nor Ovid care.
Poesy’s loftier spirit
My volume harbours there.

“ When its sweet contents bear me
Even to heaven’s domain,
Then would I in that moment
Intone a gentle strain !”

Ha, the library is where they gather?
Tidings have I heard of these same scholars . . .
Thus it is !

Quoth then the second brother :

“ And old is my folio yonder,
I read from it gladly alway ;
Time has gnawed at the year of its making.
Who printed it? No man shall say.

“ When I until late in the night-time
On the scribe’s deep ponderings pore,
My gaze can encompass clearly
All nature’s wonderful lore !”

Deeply then a solemn voice commences,
Through the hall the clamour of it reaches,
Setting o’er my head the walls aquiver :

“ Long years have I vainly for truth searched
 around,
As I probed into numberless pages ;
But here 'mid this chamber each day I have
 found
In these books the pure truth of the ages.”

Then a merry clattering of glasses.
Opening the door, I enter, greeting :
“ Mementote mori.”

Wondrous cellar !
Round me is its cool and roomy girdle.
There amid the hugeness of the barrels
Sit the fathers of this holy order
Round about a mighty oaken table ;
Unto every monk a foaming flagon.
“ Dearest brethren : Dominus vobiscum !
This is then the library ye boast of?—
Being straitly thus enjoined, has entered
Unto you your brother Marijófil,
That he may behold your cloistered dwelling,
That he may regard your skill in learning,
Which within this library ye cope with.”

I with heavy heart these lines have written,
I with heavy heart have marked this matter.
Saviour, thou whose cross is on my lectern,
Thou, up yonder, Mater Dolorosa !
Witness shall ye twain to-day vouchsafe me,
How demurringly my quill did office.

And the grievous sinner Marijófil,
Hoary grown, inditing of this volume,
Chronicle concerning this, our cloister,
Neither could do otherwise, nor durst he.
True is true. Naught else but truth shall ever
By the trusty chronicler be written.
Neither left nor right his gaze shall wander;
What to-day is spoken let him ask not.
What shall yet be spoken let him care not.
Therefore wilt thou let it not affront thee,
That to-day thy son, thy Marijófil,
Here hath chronicled this thing of wonder,
Which bechanced within our glorious cloister,
Here recorded, anno sixteen hundred
Four and sixty after Christ our Saviour;—
Well I wot that thou me all forgivest,
In thy heavenly glory, Father Bruno.

Amen.

2. THE FERRYMAN.

THE Sava 'mid fastnesses roars,
In billows it mightily pours,
To its clutches the Danube it harries.
A skiff scuds away from the side,
With naught but a fisher as guide,
At the oar he in weariness tarries. . .

“ Old man, ho, the oars to thy hand,
And swift to yon opposite land
Shalt thou steer us through Sava's dark
thunder !

Lo, glittering gold of the Turk
Shall richly requite thee thy work. . .
An thou wilt not,—thy head we will sunder!”

“ Now silent are woodland and plain,
The Slavs in yon stronghold have lain,
Serene amid slumber abiding,
Enwrapped in the mantle of night,
We are sent to lay bare to our sight
Whereabouts here our foes are in hiding. . .”

“ For your gold I have never a thought!
Doth it profit a fisherman aught?
Unbribed will I steer o’er the river!
My head, though ’tis verily grey,
This night I’ll not yield to your sway,
But my will to your hests I deliver!”

Now streamward the ferryman fares,
And swift the three watchers he bears. . .
Rowing forth he with grimness then gazes
On the waters to whom it were joy
With the skiff in their eddies to toy
And suck it deep down in their mazes. . .

“ Yea, stalwart in sooth, is thy heart,
Most meet for our guidance thou art;
In these marches there dwelleth none rarer!
Our chieftain’s acclaim we shall earn,
Fair bounty awaits our return,
Ne’er yet was vouchsafed us a fairer!”

"Make ready!" the fisherman cried,
And his oar he flung forth on the tide. . .
"For us both here the payment is tendered!"
"Curse thee, giaur!" came a shriek from the
 wave,
From the Sava, their watery grave,
Then all to the stillness surrendered. . . .

F. PREŠERN.

FROM "SONNETS OF UNHAPPINESS."

(i.)

'MID wastes of Africa a wanderer sped :
He finds no pathway ; night was now afield.
Through clouds no stealthy glimmer was
 revealed,

Craving the moon, he made the grass his bed.

The heavens opened, moonbeams then were shed ;
He sees where poison-serpents are concealed,
And where their brood of cubs the tigers shield,
He sees the lion upraise his wrathful head.

Thus 'tis the wont of youth perforce to view
What now befalls, so long the veil yet drapes
The future from the road he doth pursue.

Clearer has grown the night, and from it gapes
Loathing of life ; of pangs and griefs not few,
The deep abyss from which none e'er escapes.

(ii.)

LIFE is a jail, and time grim warder there,
Sorrow the bride made young for him each day,
Woe and despair serve faithfully his sway,
And rue his watcher with unwearied care.

Sweet death, O do not overlong forbear,
Thou key, thou portal, thou entrancing way
That guideth us from places of dismay
Yonder where moulder gnaws the gyves we wear.

Yonder where ranges no pursuing foe,
Yonder where we elude their evil plot,
Yonder where man is rid of every woe.

Yonder where, bedded in a murky grot,
Sleeps, whoso lays him there to sleep below,
That the shrill din of griefs awakes him not.

OTON ŽUPANČIČ.

ASCENSION DAY.

TODAY an Ascension Day I divine.
My heart how it surges and simmers,
My spirit silkily shimmers,
As though it had drunk of magical wine.

Mark ye not?—Yonder from forests of gloom,
Hurricanes rage,
Fierce thunderings boom,

And from out of the haze, comes the fitful blaze
Of a blood-red light, like a sword to the sight,—
'Tis the dawn of a coming age.

O, brothers apace, towards life's trace!
At the blood-red sword do not waver,
This sword was not shaped for the braver,
And for him who is hale.
Only tombs this sword overturns, and
But fallen dwellings it burns, and
He who is strong shall prevail.

O, brothers, brothers, the time is at hand!
O, brothers, brothers, how do ye stand?
Are your fields yet garnished for reaping?
Fair stars are in the ascendant,
Seed falls that is golden-resplendent,—
Are your fields yet garnished for reaping?

Shake ye stifling dreams away!
At lightning speed comes Ascension Day,—
In vain shall he cry who now goes astray,—
He only shall see it who bears the array!

“Cez Plan.”

LITERARY NOTES

PAGE

Asnyk, Adam (1838-1897). Polish poet, the pessimism of whose early work, issued under the pseudonym El...y, became modified by the contemplation of nature, and ended on a note of complete reconciliation. He was also the author of historical plays and, more effectively, of comedies, but his importance lies chiefly in the perfection of form and harmony of style which distinguish his lyric verses. 208

Aškerc,* Anton (1856-1912). Slovene poet, whose best work consists of ballads and romances, in which, without attempting any innovations of language, he contrives to write pleasant and effective verse. In Slovene literature his poetry finds a place midway between the classical diction of Prešern and the more modern achievements of such a poet as Župančič. 313

* Pron. Ashkerts.

Balmont, Konstantin Dmitryevitch (b. 1867). Russian poet, whose lyrical diction is remarkable for its eminently musical qualities. Balmont, as he himself proudly announces in "My Song-craft," has enriched the Russian language with new musical and rhythmical devices. His work as a translator is extensive—it includes Russian versions of Shelley and Whitman—but rather unequal in quality. Balmont has exerted a great influence on the development of modern Russian poetry.

191

Bezruč.* Petr (pseudonym, according to "Ceská Lyra," of Vladimír Vašek, b. 1867). Czech poet, whose "Silesian Songs" contain some of the most powerful verses in the whole of Slavonic literature. In this one small volume, Bezruč has uttered the swan-song of the Silesian Czechs, whose numbers ("The Seventy Thousand") are rapidly diminishing through the encroachment of surrounding nationalities. Several of these poems are of local interest and are strongly coloured with dialect. But about half a dozen of them attain such a degree of tragic utterance, that the

* Pron. Bezrutch.

rugged and spontaneous language remains effective even in translation. Bezruč has, in fact, written revolutionary rhapsodies, whose blend of inspired ferocity and pathos is entirely free from empty rhetoric.

222

Březina,* Otakar (pseudonym for Václav Jebavý, b. 1868). Czech poet, whose five small volumes represent the inner development of a spirit, searching, often tragically, for a solution of life's riddle. Březina's first volume, "The Secret Distances," issued in 1895, may be associated with the decadent movement (using the epithet in its widest meaning) which had affected Czech literature about that period. But his later books show him to be independent of contemporary influences. In these works he has elaborated a poetical philosophy, for which his unique style, with its wealth of imagery, mystical atmosphere and singular beauty of language, has proved a most fitting medium of expression. At the same time, its transcendental subject-matter often renders Březina's poetry obscure to all but the most disciplined of readers.

232

* Pron. Bjezina (French j; accent on 1st syllable).

Bryusov, Valery Yakovlevitch (b. 1873).

Russian poet, whose work has been strongly influenced by the French symbolists and also by Verhaeren. He has made numerous translations from both these sources. The polished and deliberate workmanship of his poems offers a contrast and a counterpoise to the impulsive and spontaneous lyricism of Balmont.

194

Chekhov, Anton Pavlovitch (1860-1904).

Chekhov's work as a novelist and playwright is so well-known, that it is hardly necessary to characterise it here. In the humorous and satirical sketch, of which a specimen is given in this collection, Chekhov is perhaps less typically Russian than in his more serious writings, but it is in this lighter medium that the general reader will best appreciate his literary qualities.

3

Dučić,* Jovan (b. 1874). Serbian poet, whose artistic style has been influenced by the French parnassians and symbolists. The perfection of form which he has derived from these sources, combined with his individual temperament, has endowed his verses with a delicate elegiac charm and subtlety of atmosphere.

* Pron. Dutchitch.

287

Gomulicki,* Wiktor (b. 1851). Polish poet and novelist. His writings, both in prose and verse, are admirable examples of elegant style and well-balanced composition. Although his subject-matter is derived mainly from various aspects of life in Warsaw, he has also dealt with the Polish peasant in a number of effective sketches.

71

Gorodetsky,† Sergey. A prominent disciple of Vyatcheslav Ivanov (q. v.). He has re-animated popular legends in language whose primitive character has strong pagan and barbaric qualities. This poetry, which because of these features is hardly to be translated, represents the Russian spirit in its pure Slavonic aspect, without Byzantine and other admixtures.

196

Hippius, Zinaida Nikolayevna (b. 1870). Russian poetess, the wife of Merezhkovsky. In addition to her verses, which are distinguished by a rather obtrusive modernity and leanings towards the metaphysical, she has written fiction and literary criticism. Her work, both in prose and verse, is pervaded by a nervous and restless atmosphere.

199

* Pron. Gomul'itski.

† Accent on 3rd syllable.

Ilić,* Vojislav (1862-1894). Serbian poet, a designation which he shares with his father Jovan, and his brothers Milutin and Dragutin. His chief merit lies in precision of form, derived largely from a study of the Russian romantic poets. In his choice of subject-matter and also in his rhythmical imitation of the hexameter he shows a fondness for classical antiquity. His poetical style, which aroused much admiration among his contemporaries, has been surpassed by the more subtle methods of such poets as Dučić and Stefanović.

288

Ivanov,† Vyatcheslav Ivanovitch (b. 1866). Russian poet, who has distinguished himself by the technical qualities of his verse, the individual diction of his language and the originality of his ideas. His poetry, sometimes liturgical in tone, has been associated with the term "realistic symbolism." It is natural that such a personality as Ivanov, in whom are combined the poet, the scholar and the philosopher, should achieve a style, which, in spite of occasional obscurity, always has the charm of polished workmanship.

197

* Pron. Ilyitch.

† Accent on 2nd syllable.

Karásek ze Lvovic,* J. (b. 1871). Czech poet of pronounced decadent tendencies. His pose of aristocratic aloofness, perhaps not unconnected with the study of Pater and Wilde, has led him to a cult of style whose effects are to be traced in many coldly beautiful verses. Whether his cravings for the morbid and perverse are sincere, is a matter which lies outside the range of literature. 244

Kasprowicz,† Jan (b. 1860). Polish poet of very strong racial individuality. His peasant origin accounts for the democratic tendencies of his work, but he has also written nature poems of great beauty. In addition to his original poetry, he is the author of translations from various European literatures. Amongst these are to be found renderings from Shakespeare, Browning and Swinburne. 209

Kláštorský,‡ Antonín (b. 1866). Czech poet and disciple of Vrchlický (q. v.). He is a great admirer of English verse and has translated (to name only a few) Byron and Longfellow, together with Elizabeth

* Pron. Zelvovits (as one word, with accent on 1st syllable).

† Pron. Kasprovitch (accent on 2nd syllable).

‡ Pron. Klahshtersky (accent on 1st syllable).

Barrett-Browning's "Sonnets from the Portuguese" and the complete poems of Oscar Wilde. Among his numerous volumes of original poetry, the most conspicuous is the collection of "Ironical Sicilian Octaves," which with their delicate but unsparing malice, contain some of the best modern Slavonic satire.

248

Konopnicka,* Marya (1846-1912). Polish poetess, whose verses reveal a deep sympathy with oppression and suffering. She has also written excellent literary criticism, sketches of travel and numerous poetical translations, especially from the other Slavonic literatures. 211

Kosor, Josip (b. 1879). Croatian poet, novelist and dramatist, four of whose plays, under the title, "People of the Universe," have already appeared in an English translation. His first collection of stories earned him the name of the Croatian Gorky. Kosor's work is marked by an impulsive energy which is not as yet sufficiently counterbalanced by a sense of form. In his plays, for example, the strength of the initial conception often suffers through this in-

* Pron. Konopnitska (accent on 3rd syllable).

ability to maintain the central idea within its appropriate medium, and a curious blend of realism, symbolism and lyricism is the result. When he outgrows these defects, Kosor, who is of peasant origin and without literary training, will produce work of a very high order.

291

Kostić,* Laza (1841-1910). Serbian poet of very marked individuality. He rendered the important service of introducing an accentual iambic rhythm into Serbian prosody, the basis of which is otherwise syllabic. Another of his innovations was free rhythm, a medium for which his energetic and rhetorical diction was peculiarly adapted. In addition to his poems, and a number of original dramas, he also produced translations from Shakespeare (Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, King Lear and Richard III.). Kostić was the first Serbian poet who wrote in the Western manner.

294

Machar, Jan Svatopluk (b. 1864). Czech author, whose work both in prose and verse, is of considerable interest. His early poems, included in the series

* Pron. Kostitch.

“Confiteor,” consist largely of sentimental lyric pieces which recall Byron, Heine and de Musset. In “Tristium Vindobona” and “Satiricon” he employs verse effectively for political satire, with strong radical and anti-clerical tendencies. His prose-works (in particular, the book “Rome”) also contain much strongly polemical matter which has gained him numerous adherents, on the one hand, aroused great opposition on the other, and caused frequent anxiety to the Austrian censor. Among the Czechs themselves he has made many enemies by his liberal interpretation of the term “patriotism.” Machar’s most lasting poetical work is probably the series beginning with the volume “Golgotha,” in which, following Vrchlický (who again was influenced by Victor Hugo’s “Légende des Siècles”) he set out to depict the most important events and personalities of history. The later volumes of the cycle however, show signs of haste, and the poetical style, never very subtle, is apt to become dry and mechanical.

117, 251

Matavulj, Simo (1852-1908). Serbian novelist, a Dalmatian by birth, but with a

close knowledge of all the Southern Slav regions. Hence, whether the scene of his stories is laid in Montenegro, on the Adriatic or in Belgrade, they are marked by the vivid reality which can be achieved only by one who is reproducing what he has constantly witnessed. Apart from their topographical interest, the stories of Matavulj have the merit of being written in a style whose leading qualities are ease and clearness.

174

Merezhkovsky, Dmitri Sergeyevitch (b. 1865).

Although Merezhkovsky is known in England as a novelist and critic, his first published work was a volume of poems, which were followed by others at a later date. Merezhkovsky's poetry is interesting, since it is that phase of his literary activity which, more than any other, reflects the image of his personality.

10, 199

Minsky, Nicolai Maximovitch (pseudonym for N. Vilenkin, b. 1855). A Russian poet whose development covers a period of transition beginning with the influence of Nadson's rather shallow pathos and passing, after an interlude of symbolism, to rhetorical verses inspired by the revolution of 1905.

200

Nazor, Vladimir (b. 1876). Croatian poet of the younger generation. His sonnets and lyrical phantasies are full of a delicate charm and an admirable precision of form. 296

Neruda, Jan (1834-1891). Czech author, whose varied activity both in prose and verse was of considerable importance. As a poet Neruda showed a width of range which up till his time had not been achieved in Czech literature. His ballads, his elegies, his patriotic poems, unite brilliant clarity of diction and directness of utterance. By his prose-works, Neruda has gained an almost unique reputation in his native country. His numerous feuilletons in "Národní Listy," the chief daily paper of Prague, became almost proverbial for their versatility and sparkling wit. He also wrote many sketches of travel and short stories, in which the homely humour is often similar to the style of Dickens. 134

Novák, Arne. Czech literary historian and professor at the University of Prague. His numerous works of criticism, which already rank as authoritative, are distinguished by both erudition and insight. 140

Preradović,* Petar (1818-1872). Croatian poet. Although his life was spent in the Austrian army, where he attained the rank of major-general, his verses reveal a deep attachment, not only to his own nation, but to all the Slavonic races. This tendency is strongly emphasised in his "Ode to Slavdom" (p. 300), one of the classical documents of Slavonic literature. As a contrast to the ornate rhetoric of this ode, Preradović wrote a number of delicate little poems in which he skilfully reproduced the spirit of Southern Slav folk-song. 300

Prešern,† France (1800-1849). The practical founder of modern Slovene literature. He rendered great services to the Slovene language which was still in the process of development, and introduced new metrical forms into Slovene poetry. His work consists of ballads, in which he took the German romantic poets as his model, sonnets, influenced in style and subject matter by Petrarch, and a lyric-epic poem, "The Baptism on the Savica." In spite of the derivative element in his

* Pron. Preradovitch (accent on 2nd syllable).

† Pron. Preshern (accent on 1st syllable).

verses, they are sufficiently marked by his own individuality to stamp them as the work of a national poet.

319

Prus, Boleslaw (pseud. for Aleksander Glowacki, 1847-1912). Polish novelist. In such works as "The Emancipated" and "The Outpost" he deals with the problems of feminism and the position of the Polish peasant, thus preparing the ground for the younger generation of Polish novelists, who have treated similar subjects with more artistic finesse. His "Pharaoh" is a historical novel which has been compared with Flaubert's "Salambo." Prus is perhaps most successful in his short tales and sketches, whose kindly humour is well in keeping with the humane tendencies they pursue.

76

Przybyszewski,* Stanislaw (b. 1868). Polish author, who has, however, written extensively also in German. His plays ("Snow," "The Golden Fleece," "The Guests") and novels ("Homo Sapiens," "Satan's Children") are strongly "modern" in tendency, and their psychological dissection of the human soul

* Pron. Pshybyshevski (accent on 3rd syllable).

frequently encroaches on the pathological. His unbalanced and even hysterical style is doubtless a genuine manifestation of Przybyszewski's temperament. But this minutely analytical method is certainly effective when applied to the criticism of an artistic personality, as in his essay on Chopin (p. 88).

88

Rakić,* Milan (b. 1876). Serbian poet, the patriotic and racial subject-matter of whose work is treated with admirable artistic finish. In his subjective lyric poetry a strongly elegiac and pessimistic tone prevails.

308

Reymont, Wladyslaw Stanislaw (b. 1868). Polish novelist. After the short sketches which constitute his early work, he revealed great powers of style and composition in a series of longer novels. "The Promised Land" (2 vols.) depicts minutely the conditions prevailing in Lodz, the great manufacturing centre of Poland. In this novel, conceived and executed on a large scale, Reymont has created a remarkable gallery of the most diverse personalities. His greatest work, however, is probably "The Peasants"

* Pron. Rakitch.

(4 vols.) a prose-epic dealing with the events of a single year in a Polish village. Reymont's powers of description, his detailed knowledge of Polish folk-lore and his masterly insight into human character have combined to produce a work which will remain one of the classics of Polish literature.

111

Rydel, Lucyan (b. 1870). Polish poet and dramatist, much of whose lyric poetry is inspired by Polish folk-song. His historical drama, "The Magic Circle," which achieved a great success, is a faithful depiction of popular manners and in its style is strongly coloured by the language of the peasants. On the other hand, Rydel has also written purely artistic verses in the manner of Verlaine, while in his mythological sonnets he attains highly decorative effects.

212

Shevtchenko,* Taras (1814-1861). The greatest of Ukrainian poets. From his early years he was familiar with the rich store of Ukrainian folk-song, and it was from this source that he derived both the variety of his rhythms and the strength and purity of his language. In the easy un-

* Accent on 2nd syllable.

studied directness of his poetry, Shevtchenko may be compared with Burns, whom he recalls also in the unhappy circumstances of his life, during which he suffered serfdom, imprisonment and persecution. Besides his poems and drawings, Shevtchenko also produced an autobiographical novel entitled "The Artist."

61, 204

Sologub,* Fyodor Kuzmitch (pseud. for Teternikov), b. 1863. The novels and short stories of Sologub are becoming familiar to English readers. His verses often present the same morbid qualities as his prose; but, as the examples in this anthology will show, neither the one nor the other is exclusively occupied with the darker aspects of the soul.

25, 201

Sova, Antonín (b. 1864). Czech poet. If Březina's name is associated with symbolism, Machar's with realism, Sova may be credited with a mastery of impressionism. His early work consisted largely of descriptive and decorative poetry which records the effective observation of town and country scenes. In subsequent volumes Sova is concerned with the more complex matters which lie

* Accent on 3rd syllable.

beneath the surface of life. These poems, in which Sova's subtle and exquisite lyrical style (a mean between Machar's rather prosaic directness and Březina's shadowy music) develops to a high degree of perfection, reveal the conflicts of a sensitive spirit with inner and outer circumstances. And as Březina in his last and ripest volume, "The Hands," arrives at a passionate optimism, so in "The Harvests," the struggles and torments of Sova's earlier manhood are clarified in a placid affirmation of life. 260

Staff, Leopold (b. 1878). Polish poet of the younger generation. His verses are often marked by an elemental vigour which contrasts with the keynote of pessimism sounded by many of his contemporaries. Besides his lyric poems, he has written an epic, "Master Twardowski," based upon the Polish version of the Faust legend. 215

Stefanović,* Svetislav (b. 1877). Serbian poet. Just as Dučić has enriched modern Serbian poetry by studying the work of the French symbolists, so Stefanović has come under the influence of the English poets, especially of the pre-Raphael-

* Pron. Stefanovitch (accent on 2nd syllable).

ite school. The poetry of Stefanović, who handles the sonnet with great skill, has that polished stateliness for which the Serbian language is so adapted. He has also translated Wilde's "Ballad of Reading Gaol," several of Shakespeare's sonnets, together with various poems of Keats, Tennyson, Swinburne and Rossetti.

309

Szczepanski,* Ludwik (b. 1872). Polish lyric poet, whose verses reveal a tendency towards mysticism, as in the collection "Lunatica," and towards realism in his "Viennese Sonnets."

216

Šantić, Alexander (b. 1868). Serbian poet from Mostar. His work is distinguished by strong racial qualities. In addition to verses in which he reveals his close sympathy with the peasants, he has taken the picturesque scenery of his native district as the theme for a number of charming poems. His subjective lyric poetry is elegiac in character. As a master of metrical form Šantić ranks high among modern Serbian poets. His translation of Heine's "Intermezzo," for example, is regarded as a great achievement.

312

* Pron. Shchepanski (accent on 2nd syllable).

Šrámek,* Fráňa (b. 1877). Czech author, whose work, both in prose and verse, shows considerable promise. In "Flames," a volume of fragile, impressionistic short stories, the influence of such writers as Gorky and Dostoyevsky is very pronounced, but here, as also in the one-act play, "June," (p. 150), Šrámek gives adequate evidence of individual artistic qualities.

150

Tetmajer (Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer, b. 1865). Polish poet and novelist. His literary career began in 1888, when, with Adam Asnyk as judge, he was awarded the first prize for a poem on Mickiewicz. Tetmajer's work consists partly of purely æsthetic writing, such as the "Poems in Prose," and partly of that very different type of production in which he is inspired by the wild scenery of his native Carpathians and the strange national type who dwell there. It is in this phase that Tetmajer's lyric temperament is revealed at its strongest. (See, for example, the poem entitled "Czardas," p. 220). In a number of prose-sketches Tetmajer has admirably reproduced the

* Pron. Shrahmek.

character of the district and inhabitants, not by paraphrasing their legends and traditions, but by narrating purely imaginative incidents in the spirit and often in the language of the people. His novels dealing with society life present, in tone and feeling, a complete contrast to the naivety and freshness of these peasant tales.

218

Tsensky (N. S. Sergeyev-Tsensky). Russian novelist, whose early work, written under the influence of Andreyev, is consequently pessimistic in character. In his prose style he has endeavoured to create new devices for the vivid presentment of objects and ideas. Although this desire to avoid the hackneyed has led him into the use of affected impressionistic images, he often succeeds admirably in reproducing the atmosphere suited to the setting of his stories.

58

Theer, Otakar (b. 1880). One of the most gifted among the younger Czech poets. The rather obtrusive decadence of his very early verses was followed, after an interval of over ten years, by the collection "Anguish and Hope," in which his personality is revealed in stronger and

riper manifestations. Pessimism is not absent, but it is modified by a wider knowledge of life. In this volume, Theer gives proof of great technical skill. The variety of his metres and the melodious diction of his language are admirable. His later poems in free rhythm, which are rather of an experimental nature, appear to be lacking in the spontaneous qualities of his best verses.

274

Vrchlický,* Jaroslav (pseudonym for Emil Frida, 1853-1912). The greatest name in Czech literature. The mere quantity of his work is astonishing. It consists of (1) over 80 volumes of lyric and epic poetry, (2) 30 plays, (3) 12 libretti for operas, (4) over 12 volumes of prose, (5) nearly 50 volumes of translated verse, (6) over 35 translations of plays, (7) 6 volumes of translated prose. These translations include the whole of Ariosto, Camoens, Dante, Tasso, together with extensive selections from Byron, Victor Hugo, Shelley, Tennyson, Whitman, Calderon, Goethe (the complete "Faust"), and several anthologies of modern English, French and Italian poetry. By this enormous body of work,

* Pron. Verchlitsky (ch as in loch).

Vrchlický enriched the Czech language and widened its metrical resources, while he influenced the progress of the literature to an extent which it is difficult to estimate. In his original work Vrchlický was most effective as a lyric poet. He wrote in this medium with a freshness, a fervour and a melodious charm which, in his best poems, can be compared with the lyrical style of Swinburne or d'Annunzio. The facility with which he composed, led him at times into rather shallow improvisations, and some of his critics are apt to lay stress upon these weaker aspects of his productions, although such lapses are comparatively rare. In the same way, Vrchlický has been reproached for the close attention he paid to foreign literatures, while other Czech poets were more exclusively national. But the critics who urged this against him did not realize that before Czech literature could become truly national, it must first be made international. By Vrchlický's efforts, it was raised to this higher plane, and before the close of the 19th century, it had acquired the status of a European literature. Both as an original poet and as

a translator, Vrchlický influenced a number of writers who, often with marked success, have continued and amplified the work which was begun modestly in 1874 with a small volume of translations from Victor Hugo. 276

Župančič,* Oton (b. 1879). The most prominent Slovene poet of to-day. His lyric verses, which soon passed through an early decadent phase, urge the younger generation to seek for noble ideals. Together with a warmth and freshness which often recall the style of Slavonic folk-songs, they combine the technical finesse of the ripest modern artistic poetry. 320

* Pron. Zhupantchitch (ch as French j, accent on 1st syllable).

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